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MEMOIRS OF MISS MELLON

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# Memoirs of the Duchess de Tourzel,

*Governess to the Children of France, 1789 to 1795.*

BY THE

DUKE DES CARS.

*Two Vols., Demy 8vo, 32s.*

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REMINGTON & Co., HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

# MEMOIRS OF MISS MELLON

AFTERWARDS

DUCHESS OF ST. ALBANS

BY

MRS CORNWELL BARRON-WILSON

*Author of "The Life & Correspondence of M. G. Lewis."*

IN TWO VOLUMES

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VOL II

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Friendship of Mr. Coutts's family for Miss Mellon becomes more evident—The story of the paste necklace—Miss Mellon obtains a prize in the lottery—Deep-laid designs on her purse—The one-pound note and Mrs. Entwisle—The "Mellon livery"—Mrs. Entwisle's dread of Miss Mellon marrying—Mr. "Raggy," the Belgian officer—Post-office neglects at Cheltenham—Detention of an important letter—Its consequences.

THE marked friendship of the Coutts family for Miss Mellon became a matter of such general notoriety in the dramatic world that, previous to the opening of the new Drury Lane Theatre, it was much doubted whether she would again resume her profession. It was generally thought that a similar engagement as that the Earl of Derby had formed with Miss Farren had been entered into, and that, after the death of the afflicted Mrs. Coutts, Miss Mellon was destined to take her place.

Although the patronage of Mr. Coutts brought her many friends, who, anticipating her future opulence, were anxious to worship the rising sun, yet the envious became her enemies—as the following anecdote will prove, besides illustrating upon how slight a tenure the private reputation of an actress is held, and upon what trivial grounds it may be blasted.

The disappearance of a diamond necklace formed one of the accusations against the fascinating Marie Antoinette, who lost her life by “slandorous tongues.” Within a very short time of the royal suffering, a painful circumstance occurred in humble life to a struggling, hapless young actress, who lost her reputation by *a necklace of paste!* The particulars of this unlucky decoration Miss Mellon frequently related to her friends.

Miss De Camp, speaking one day in the green-room respecting stage-jewels, expressed a wish to find some jeweller who sold coloured imitation gems, for the decoration of a costume she was having prepared. Miss Mellon mentioned having seen some excellent imitations in the window at Messrs. Grayhurst’s, and promised to try there for the kind required by Miss De Camp.

Miss Mellon accordingly went to inquire respecting them, and the jewellers (who were patrons of Miss Mellon at her benefits) having shown her the

articles wanted, mentioned that they had some very beautiful paste ornaments, which, on the stage, looked nearly as well as diamonds; and they advised her to have some, as being particularly becoming to dark persons.

Miss Mellon inquired the price; and they said it would be impossible to make up a handsome necklace under six guineas. Such a sum was totally out of the question for her means, and she relinquished all hope of it; but Messrs. Grayhurst said she might pay by weekly instalments until her benefit, when they would take the balance in tickets, so she ordered the necklace, arranging to pay five shillings per week until her approaching benefit.

When the necklace came home, her delight at its brilliancy knew no bounds. It was tried on her neck, her hair, round her wrist, on her waist, and in every manner she fancied it looked beautiful. She admitted no one during the day, wishing the prize to be a secret until the evening, and fearful that in her ecstasy she might betray it. The clocks of London seemed all to sleep through that long period, until the hour arrived for dressing for the theatre, and even then she was dressed long before the other actresses had commenced their preparations; but they had no paste-diamonds to exhibit on that occasion! When she appeared, they complimented her on the necklace "really not looking

so bad, considering the trifling cost of that sort of thing!"—a remark which she considered quite inapplicable to an expensive article for which, to her, a sum so considerable was owing.

The play was "The Rivals," and as *Lydia Languish* she appeared sparkling and satisfied, until, looking towards the right-hand stage-box, she saw Mr. Coutts, with some of his family and grandchildren, making signs to her, and laughing heartily as he examined her finery through his opera glass.

In the scene where *Mrs. Malaprop* introduces *Captain Absolute* to *Lydia*, who will not look towards him, she had to stand on their side of the stage, with an unconquerable expression of distress on her upturned countenance, during which she heard a little child's voice whisper behind the curtain of Mr. Coutts's box, "Harriot, I want my tea! Come and give us some when this act is over. How much were your glass beads a pound?"

At the end of the act she went round to help her little thirsty friend in the box, and endured their general quiz of her mock brilliants while remaining there until her appearance was again required. While hurrying back she encountered one of the workmen of the friendly jewellers, and holding up his work, she said, as she pretended to weep, "They all quiz them as common glass!" She just caught his rejoinder, "I wish to heaven, Miss Mellon, that *all* did so." There was no time to

question, but she thought, as she entered the scene (to make some sentimental speech), "That man might have spared his impertinence to one who means to pay honestly. Six guineas indeed!"

The hapless necklace requiring some alteration, she took it next morning to the makers; and there she learnt the astounding explanation of the man's remark at the theatre.

He had gone to the pit expressly to see the effect of his own workmanship, "which really looked wonderfully well considering;" and having taken his place near the pit critics, he overheard one exclaim, "Miss Mellon in a diamond necklace—a creature with three or four pounds a week only!—it's quite shameful!" Another rejoined, "So it is—that monied old banker there would give her anything; it must have cost him £10,000!" But when she was seen in the box with Mr. Coutts's family, the indignation in the pit had no bounds: "That she should presume to appear among the family in the diamonds of which she had defrauded them, was really carrying daring too far!" The jeweller here explained that they were doing an unjustifiable injury to Miss Mellon, as the necklace was imitation, and a matter of moderate cost; but the wisdom of the critics was not to be hoodwinked: "Thank you for the information, sir; we make no doubt Miss Mellon gave you *an order* to say so!"

One of the papers took up the story of a "certain



opulent old banker, and a certain actress with a certain necklace." Then came initials; next the name of one party, and then the whole of the names; and as that of Mr. Coutts was almost proverbial, the necklace formed a brilliant ornament for the country papers, giving great employment to scissors-and-paste.

As this was the first occasion on which the press attacked Miss Mellon and her worthy benefactor, her indignation knew no bounds. Some of her professional contemporaries say they thought she would have gone out of her senses.

Mrs. Entwisle, ever one of Job's comforters, wrote to express a fear that some thoughtless action of hers had caused the misrepresentation, and that most likely she would lose the patronage of Mr. Coutts and his family. Thus beset, she took an aversion to the unlucky necklace, though her pride would not admit of acknowledging that she was wounded by the unfounded attacks: therefore she went again to the theatre wearing the ornament.

Mrs. Mountain, who was in the green-room when Miss Mellon entered, sauntered up, and, examining the necklace, said, with a supercilious smile, "Very beautiful indeed; and diamonds of course."

Miss Mellon quietly walked up to Miss Tidswell (who was just going on the scene as *Lucy*) and

requested her to unfasten the necklace. This being done, she clasped it round Miss Tidswell's neck, calmly saying, "Miss Tidswell, I give this to you. Mrs. Mountain says they are *diamonds*, and *she* no doubt can afford to buy them from you."

Miss Tidswell, who has frequently related this anecdote, considered her stock of stage-jewels considerably enhanced by the acquisition; but they were not to be worn without a heavy penalty being attached to them. Rumour proclaimed during the next week that "diamond necklaces were now the only wear on Drury Lane stage; another actress having appeared in one of great beauty which a noble duke had presented to her."

When the Duchess of St. Albans spoke of the adventure of her paste necklace, and its subsequent donation to Miss Tidswell, it was suggested that she should reclaim so evil a talisman. The duchess said she longed to behold the unlucky trinket again, and requested Miss Tidswell to dispose of it to her. The latter, however, on her retirement from the stage, had bestowed all her stage properties on the late Mr. Kean (her nephew, whom she had brought up from infancy), and among other articles the necklace of Miss Mellon, which Kean always wore in the turban of *Othello*. She added, that probably Mrs. Kean might have retained it in her possession.

Mrs. Kean, however, stated that it had been sold with the rest of the wardrobe ; and some person at Richmond was found, by the auction-book, to have purchased the entire costume of Othello, including the charmed necklace. The duchess vainly tried to repurchase it, through the efforts of many searchers; and the unknown proprietor of Othello's turban has it decorated with a most mischief-causing necklace, which must have been formed of some dangerous sort of *Der Freischutz* paste.

About this time Miss Mellon came to the theatre one morning very much exhilarated, and announced to her theatrical friends, that Wewitzer had bought for her a lottery ticket, which had been drawn a prize of £5,000, a fact which Wewitzer afterwards confirmed. An actor of some celebrity inquired what was the number of her ticket, and at what office she bought it ; to all of which Wewitzer gave the most satisfactory replies, and defeated his malicious envy.\* As the first use of her good fortune, she sent £100 to the Drury Lane Fund, and the same to Covent Garden. In 1812, she gave £50 more, and £10 for five tickets. Mr. Coutts was a donor to the Covent Garden Fund as early as 1786, and sent donations in 1801 and 1809.

When Miss Mellon had but £4 per week she

\* Several humble friends then begged her to join them in a ticket ; and even by this she gained £50.

employed her leisure in making up clothes for the poorer classes, which, as she was then herself too poor to give away, she lent on those occasions when indigent women have the strongest claim upon the sympathies of their own sex. She who would thus give the labour of her hands, as well as the contents of her purse, to aid the unfortunate, when herself scarcely above poverty, might naturally be expected to extend her munificence when her means permitted her. The instant Miss Mellon was known to be rich, applications poured in upon her from all sides. Schemes for the investment of capital; requests for loans in cases of emergency, to be repaid with interest; appeals to recollections of early acquaintance, and downright begging letters, assailed Miss Mellon when she had about £8 a-week at Drury Lane in as great a quantity as those that followed her when she became a duchess.

Among the members of the dramatic profession, instances of high honour, boundless generosity, and the most scrupulous correctness in all the duties of life, are numerous; but in that, perhaps, more than in any other vocation, poverty and extravagance teach artifice. It would fill not a few chapters to detail the schemes and tricks (known on undoubted authority by many now living) which were tried by needy or extravagant actors, and even managers, all directed to one point—the purse of Miss Mellon.

As the persons who sought favours from her were of course foremost amid her detractors, the story of the £5,000 prize, notwithstanding Wewitzer's solemn assurance as to the purchase, was repudiated altogether; and with an assumption of superior intelligence, many persons affirmed that the friendship of Mr. Coutts assisted her with money. Had this been the fact, it is questionable whether it would have been sufficient to supply the requests, not to call them demands, of her needy petitioners.

Happy was it for her that railroads at that period did not exist, for she certainly would have been pestered to purchase shares in every one of them, by those who would probably have bought them merely for the chance of selling them to her.

The truth is that, whether she was assisted by Mr. Coutts or not, she must by this time have been comparatively rich; for, independent of her luck in the lottery, she had accumulated nearly three thousand pounds by her provincial engagements, particularly those fulfilled in Liverpool, and was enabled not only to purchase the house in Little Russell Street, in which she took her first lodging, but also her more favourite Holly Lodge.

Poor Mrs. Hogg, Miss Mellon's dresser, had a sad time of it; if she resisted the offer of a bribe (which it is said she very conscientiously did), she



could scarcely withstand appeals to her feelings to tell Miss Mellon "of a poor man who had a tea-service that he was obliged to part with on any terms;" "furniture which his means would not allow him to keep;" or "a father of a family taken from them to prison for a debt of only four or five pounds." The benevolence must have been innate that all this could not wear out. There are a dozen performers now living who can testify that no petition whatever from a distressed comedian (or anyone however remotely connected with the drama) ever came into Drury Lane Theatre without Miss Mellon giving her mite, from the time when she was an actress and in poverty in 1800, to her quitting the profession in 1815.

A word or two about this system of petitioning. Actors have more claims made upon them than any other class of persons. A week seldom passes that an appeal is not made by some distressed person to the humanity of her Majesty's servants, who, as they support their own poor by their fund, ought really to be exempted from such exactions, unless in cases of extreme destitution. How often these appeals are made would be matter for regret rather than complaint, if it were not notorious that not a few persons live entirely by travelling from town to town, and sending in a petition to the theatres in them! One person, who played an insignificant

part in "The Mountaineers" on its original production, on the strength of that alone, pursued this *respectable* vocation upwards of twenty years, and, if now living, doubtless continues it still.

This worthy wrote a letter to Mrs. Coutts,—it is to be presumed when under the influence of libations to the health of his benefactress,—commencing in this pleasantly familiar strain :

"Again am I reduced, my dear Madam, to a state of the greatest difficulty," &c.

He had been one season in Drury Lane Theatre, during which time, from his habits (not his station, which was only just above that of a supernumerary), it is most probable Miss Mellon never exchanged a word with him. Yet that she had been an actress was an excuse in his mind for addressing her with such flippant familiarity. This person was as vain as he was indolent, and was continually recurring to "his original part in London ;" it consisted of about three lines, yet he always maintained that he was discharged because "Kemble was jealous of him." The way in which vanity acts in a theatre is laughably absurd. This very man, when charged with being inebriated during his performance, replied, "Well, so was Mr. Suett, sir ;" not considering that what a manager might be compelled to submit to in an actor of great talents, he could hardly be expected to suffer in one of no powers at all.

But it was not by strangers only that Miss Mellon's liberality was frequently practised upon. Her mother indulged in deep-laid schemes ; some of which, in their subsequent detection, would have been laughable enough, if it had not been for the artful, mean spirit in which they must have originated. The following is an instance out of many similar ones which were of constant occurrence :—

While they were living near Covent Garden a lady in pecuniary distress made her altered circumstances known to them, and Miss Mellon sent her a contribution. Mrs. Entwisle shortly afterwards, expressing sympathy for the lady, announced her intention of sending a pound ; and, accordingly, the maid-servant was despatched with a one-pound note, such being at that time in circulation.

In the course of a few hours, Mrs. Entwisle went, in apparent trouble, to the landlady who owned the house, and related “ what an unfortunate mistake she had made in her charitable donation, having given a *fifty*-pound note instead of the *one* she intended ! ”

This sounded rather doubtful to her auditor, who was no stranger to Mrs. Entwisle's little schemes ; and her suspicions were confirmed by being cautioned “ not to tell dear Harriot for some days, as she would be annoyed at my carelessness.”

But the lady privately sent the maid to the person in distress, requesting she would be kind enough to give back the note in exchange for another, as there was something particular relating to it.

The note had not yet been changed by the distressed person, who gave it back in the envelope—as she had received it. Miss Mellon's hostess found, as she had expected, that it was for one pound only; and put it away, without comment, to await the result.

In a few days, Mrs. Entwisle (having given the note sufficient time for circulation, as she supposed, past any chance of discovery) came into the sitting-room with a melancholy and troubled air.

“What is the matter, dear mother?”

“Oh, Harriot, think of my carelessness; I am ashamed to confess it; I have given away a fifty-pound note in mistake for *a one!*”

“But is it past recovery?”

“Oh, perfectly so; it was to that poor, distressed woman the other day, and of course she changed it directly, so I shall never see it again.”

“I am very sorry, dear mother.”

“Yes, my dear; but the worst of the matter is, that I have not another sixpence in the world, and *that* money was required for a most pressing matter. Could you, dear—eh, hem—assist me with the amount?”

Miss Mellon was preparing to replace it as far as her own funds went, when her friend said "she was most happy in having the power *to relieve Mrs. Entwisle's anxiety*; for having heard her mention the serious loss at the time, she had instantly sent to reclaim the note, in exchange for another, and fortunately had secured it, actually in Mrs. Entwisle's envelope!" She handed the latter to the discomfited mother, who took it in the greatest confusion, and tried to make some speech about supposing she had given the £50 to someone else.

The doubts expressed of Miss Mellon's joining the company in the new theatre were ill-founded. She was exceedingly attached to her profession, and, in addition to the loss of her very liberal salary, she would by retiring forego many agreeable associations connected with it. She had always been an active green-room chatterer, and those who have indulged in the social converse which prevails in a well-regulated theatre find it hard to relinquish the pleasure.

Hence Miss Mellon's name *did* appear in the list of the company; and when it assembled, she was courted or "toadied" as the banker's future wife, according to the character of each individual belonging to the theatre; but her long personal acquaintance with the stage-manager (Mr. Raymond), and the high esteem in which she was at that time held

by the acting managers, Messrs. Whitbread and Arnold, gave her much influence in the establishment.

She commenced with an act of that thoughtful benevolence which was peculiar to her disposition, and which happily she had afterwards the means of gratifying so extensively.

Taking into consideration the almost ruinous loss the burning of the old theatre must have occasioned her theatrical sisterhood who were on small salaries, she presented to some twenty or thirty of them who were not above accepting such a kindness, a warm Bath cloak, and other useful articles of dress, calculated to shield the wearers from the inclemency of the weather in their nightly transits to and from the theatre. Such is the uncertainty of worldly gratitude that, while many blessed the donor of the comforts they enjoyed, there were not wanting some who apologized to their friends for appearing before them in "*the Mellon livery!*" which they nevertheless, as it was seldom or ever exhibited by daylight, continued to wear, while ridiculously ashamed of the voluntary obligations they had incurred.

It seems to have been decreed that the current of Miss Mellon's domestic life should be every now and then ruffled by the oddities and violence of her mother's temper.

Mrs. Entwisle had always dreaded the idea of her

daughter marrying—partly from the jealousy of affection, but chiefly from the pecuniary loss she would experience if another object of attachment claimed the generosity by which she was benefited; and living in perpetual fear of Miss Mellon making some imprudent match, she was ever seeking out the various rumours of marriages which naturally were in circulation respecting a young woman in a public profession.

When any of these assumed the slightest appearance of truth, her rage became ungovernable; and, instead of writing to the principal party concerned, she would start off for London, and present herself before the astonished eyes of Miss Mellon, speechless with anger, until a flood of tears in some measure relieved her excitement.

Among the visitors introduced by Mr. Coutts at Little Russell Street was a Belgian, named Col. Raguet, a person of good fortune and family, who was in this country on some diplomatic mission.\* Miss Mellon was much pleased with the agreeable manners and talent of the foreigner, so that he was occasionally a guest at her small dinner parties, which were given at the primitive hour of half-past three, her professional engagements preventing later hours.

\* His son was grand chamberlain to the Princes of Orange during their *séjour* in England in 1836, and visited the duke and duchess at Holly Lodge.



Mrs. Entwisle soon heard of the audacious stranger who was considered likely to marry Harriot, and take her away from assisting her family. This was to be prevented under all risks ; therefore she left Cheltenham at night, and entered her daughter's apartment just after breakfast. Here she threw herself on the sofa—her countenance darkened with rage ; and, after various strange interjections, screamed forth, “ That starving black fellow, I'll be the death of him ! ”

Miss Mellon vainly endeavoured to ascertain who was the subject of so much vituperation ; guessing it was another version of the old anti-matrimonial lecture, yet never imagining that “ the starving black fellow ” could allude to Colonel Raguet, whose means were apparently ample, and who, moreover, was a fair, light-haired person.

She was at length enlightened by her mother saying, “ He shan't marry you, Harriot—I'll kill him first ! his very name proves he's a beggar. *Mr. Raggy*, indeed ! Just think of your being called *Mrs. Raggy* ; a nasty, black, deceiving, fortune-hunting, foreign fellow ; if you marry him, I'll be the death of you both ! ”

Argument was vain with the furious woman, so Miss Mellon did not attempt an explanation ; and, in the midst of the storm, Colonel Raguet and a friend entered, unannounced, for probably



the old landlady was either baking muffins or measuring out milk at the time.

Colonel Raguet spoke excellent English; and finding a seat next to Mrs. Entwisle, rendered himself so agreeable that she was delighted with his conversation. After staying some time the visitors departed, and she was enchanted with "that nice, fair-haired man, who must be a gentleman of fortune, from his dress and his horses; and if Harriot was going to make a fool of herself by marrying anybody, why did she not fancy that real fine gentleman, who treated her with such respect, instead of that penniless, worthless, ugly, black, ragged vagabond, *Mister Raggy*, who was sure to beat her!"

Miss Mellon, who liked to have her little jest at the expense of Mrs. Entwisle's unbounded and unfounded rages, replied, "That she was quite of her mother's opinion regarding the superiority of her late visitor, who, however, had no idea of her beyond an acquaintance; he had been introduced by Mr. Coutts lately, and she had quite forgotten his name, so she wished her mother would step down and inquire whether the landlady remembered who he was.

Away went Mrs. Entwisle on her mission of curiosity, her daughter listening for the result of the information. But when Mrs. Silcock replied—

“La, love you ; to be sure I do ! why that is Mr. Coutts’s foreign gentleman, *Colonel Raggy* !” Mrs. Entwisle, with a scream, told her it was false, and that the starving, black Raggy had bribed her to tell stories and induce Harriot to marry him. In short, Miss Mellon was obliged to descend and pacify the belligerents, by confessing her share in the recent deception. But, although Mrs. Entwisle was satisfied that the visitor was “quite a fine gentleman,” nothing would persuade the illiterate poor woman that he was not a disguised Englishman ; because, she said, foreigners talked nothing but French, and were always yellow, and black, and starving !

The carelessness with which Mr. and Mrs. Entwisle conducted the affairs connected with the post-office had been more than once a subject of serious complaint among the residents of Cheltenham. Perhaps there is no species of inattention that rouses such unforgiving accusers as that which interrupts due intercourse by means of the post ; and menaces were not wanting to the heedless postmaster that a representation should be made to the office in London, stating his inefficiency, and requiring another to be appointed in his stead. But he and his wife received their customary set of cronies, and enjoyed their stout ale as usual, thinking there would always be safety in the natural indolence of

human nature, and that the persons who might scold them severely would never take the trouble of writing an official letter to demand their dismissal.

From this agreeable security they were roused by the results of a circumstance which caused an unusual sensation even in that gossiping town.

A young gentleman at Cheltenham had received private intelligence that his father, who resided at some considerable distance, had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill. Being engaged in important business at Cheltenham which required his personal superintendence, he deferred leaving it until he had written home to inquire whether his chance information had been founded on reality, urging his family, of course, to relieve his anxiety with a letter by return of post.

The day but one succeeding, his anxiety made him call personally at the post-office to inquire for the expected communication; but Mr. Entwisle (without even examining the letters), on hearing the name, pronounced the disheartening negative, and the young man had to endure for another day the pain of suspense. As soon as the office was open he was there the next morning, with almost a certainty that someone of his family would have found time to write; but again the laconic denial was given, and the afflicted son resolved that, if the morrow's post brought him no intelligence, he would

sacrifice all his labour and prospects of success at Cheltenham, and set forth for his paternal abode.

On the third day, when he applied, the unsympathizing, careless postmaster, without glancing at the letters, told the young gentleman sharply that there was nothing for him. The applicant was now excited to a state of the greatest agitation, and begged Mr. Entwisle would at least examine the letters on that morning, as a considerable sacrifice was depending upon there being none addressed to him.

Mr. Entwisle, thus urged to his duty, turned to collect the letters which were carelessly scattered about in various parts of the room, and among them he found one for the anxious applicant; but instead of handing it to him, with an apology for his unpardonable carelessness, he was seen, by several persons then passing, to throw the letter into the street !

The young man, rejoicing to receive it on any terms, picked it up quietly, and examining the post-mark, found it had been at the Cheltenham post-office since the first day of his inquiry.

The individuals who, in passing, had witnessed the coarseness displayed by Mr. Entwisle at the detection of his shameful irregularity, now lingered to hear if any unpleasant results had arisen from it.

The delayed letter contained a statement of the

almost certainty of the old gentleman's immediate decease, and requesting the son to abandon all his prospects in Cheltenham, and return home with the utmost possible celerity. The young man, who resolved to start instantly, gave the crowd notice that if he were too late for his afflicting duty he would visit it on the postmaster, and also deprive him of his livelihood. He arrived at home in the shortest possible time; but too late, for all was over!

When his feelings recovered the shock, he resolved to prosecute his revenge against the unfeeling cause of part of his sorrow. He drew up a statement against Entwisle, with a petition for his dismissal, signed by the majority of the upper classes of Cheltenham; and this was transmitted to the postmaster-general.

The next post brought Mr. Entwisle a private notice that he was about to be dismissed. The sole hope they had in every case of trouble was an application to his warm-hearted step-daughter, who, however angrily she expressed herself at their continual dilemmas, yet never failed to lend an assisting hand to avert their consequences.

There was no time to be lost. Mrs. Entwisle would not trust the important demand to any other pleading but her own; she left Cheltenham on the instant, and suddenly rushing into her daughter's

room in London, treated her first with fainting, and then hysterics—natural, or very well imitated. Miss Mellon was excessively alarmed, knowing her mother's violence to be such that she dreaded apoplexy under this extreme excitement, which she concluded had arisen from some unforeseen and unmerited misfortune.

But when Mrs. Entwisle thought fit to explain all the particulars, Miss Mellon's anxiety was changed to anger that her step-father should behave so incorrigibly ill in the situation she had procured for him as to disgrace continually her recommendation; and she insisted that matters might now take their course, as she would not interfere in so bad a cause.

Mrs. Entwisle knew her disposition too well to be discomfited by her just expression of anger; she awaited the reaction, and artfully drew such a picture of her own distress (wisely leaving out the offender) that her fond child could not bear it; and, finally, she promised to make a statement of the facts to Mr. Coutts, and beg of him to use his influence in the delinquent's behalf, and Mrs. Entwisle now departed satisfied.

Mr. Coutts, from whom none of the facts were concealed, thought it a difficult task; but reflecting that those two drones, if deprived of that means of living, would never try another, but would be too happy to have the excuse of preying on the means

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of their child, he resolved to do his utmost; and what was it that Mr. Coutts could not effect? Mr. Entwisle, after a severe reproof and a notice that the next offence should be decisive beyond appeal, was allowed to remain as usual, enjoying his ale, and neglecting the distribution of letters.

## CHAPTER II.

Opening of Drury Lane Theatre—The Duke of York—The prompter's benefit, and a ticket for the gallery—The price of a late rehearsal : a champagne supper.

THE theatre opened on the 10th of October, 1812, with an address written by Lord Byron, and delivered by Elliston. The play was "Hamlet," and the farce, "The Devil to Pay," in which Miss Mellon performed *Nell* to Dowton's *Jobson*. This line of character she had entirely to herself during the whole season ; the other departments of female comedy in which she had hitherto appeared with success being filled by the following ladies :—Mrs. Edwin, then a great favourite ; Mrs. Glover, who played the *Mrs. Oakleys* ; Miss Kelly, then rising into eminence ; Mrs. Orger and Mrs. Horn, who played sentimental ladies ; lastly, Mrs. Davison, for high comedy.

Notwithstanding so powerful an array of talent,



there remained a line of broad farce, or farcical comedy, unfilled, and for which the *gaieté d'esprit* and buoyancy of manner of Miss Mellon peculiarly fitted her. Of this line of character she took possession by general consent.

Besides a great accession of theatrical "friends," the extreme probability of her eventual, and perhaps not distant, union with Mr. Coutts occasioned Miss Mellon to be courted by a highly respectable and increasing acquaintance; and as all ranks, from his Royal Highness the Duke of York to individuals of much humbler class, were daily making interest to inspect the interior arena of the new theatre, the many acquaintance of Miss Mellon were as little backward in soliciting this gratification through her means as *she* was averse to procuring their admission. On these occasions she was particularly partial to acting the part of cicerone; and, with as much humour as minuteness, she exhibited and explained the construction and uses of machinery, models, pantomimic tricks, thunder, lightning, movable waves, moonlight, &c., &c. This is mentioned to introduce a sterling proof of the genuine kindness of her disposition (notwithstanding her recollection of received offence) which was evinced during one of these practical instances of good nature.

She one evening brought a party behind the

scenes a short time prior to the commencement of the play, a favour no other person in the house would perhaps have been able to obtain; and our informant, who was present, saw her with a little fairy wand, which she had picked up in the property room, pointing out what she thought most worthy the observation of her friends. After this, she began in a half whisper to name, not only some of the performers, as they came down stairs dressed for their respective characters, but even to announce the rank or designations of many visitors or patrons who were passing over the stage to their private boxes. "Here comes his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester." "Allow me to introduce you to my Lord Erskine." "That is Mrs. Garrick;" "that is Lady Elizabeth Whitbread;" "and here comes a man who took from me one of my best friends, whom I loved as a sister—a man to whom I never will speak again!" This was said very audibly, purposely so, in appearance; and its publicity called down the very proper official reproof of the then stage-manager, at whom she only laughed good-humouredly; then turning abruptly from him to a little box behind the proscenium, she added, "and there sits my friend Mr. —, our prompter."

The latter, as the curtain was just about to be raised, did not appear pleased at being thus particularized; and, taking the wand gently out of her hand as it pointed towards him, gravely said, "My

dear Miss Mellon, I do not exactly approve of being thus stirred up with a long pole, like a wild beast. Besides which, as the play is beginning, you must be aware you are infringing a rule, and obstructing the stage business." The lady, perhaps rather displeased with herself, as she and her friends were certainly at that time intrusive, turned away, and led off her companions, saying, "Come away; there's a great man in office for you; but, indeed, I do not think him a *beast*, and perhaps I may let him know as much."

The prompter's benefit took place soon after. It was formerly the case for each principal performer to acknowledge the attentions of such officer (who has no sinecure place of it) by a pecuniary compliment for a ticket on his benefit-night; and Mr. Spring\* was sent by Miss Mellon to Mr. —— with the following billet, enclosing a Bank-of-England note for £25.

"DEAR SIR,—Have the goodness to give Spring a gallery ticket for me; *and keep me a place for one*. I enclose the price of it.

"Yours, very truly,

"H. MELLON."

\* Mr. Samuel Spring, who was for many years box book-keeper at Drury Lane Theatre, acquired some celebrity in the "sporting" circles, principally derived from a horse-racing transaction with the Prince of Wales, which gave some employment to the legal profession. While these sheets were going through the press an announcement of his death appeared in the newspapers.

Another anecdote, highly illustrative of Miss Mellon's characteristic gaiety and whimsical good-nature, has reached us from the hands of Mr. Dibdin, and which he thus relates—

During the period of Mr. Stephen Kemble's engagement at Drury Lane,\* a rehearsal had been announced for a following morning at ten o'clock ; and this hour had been requested by Mr. Kemble, in order that he might fulfil a City engagement at or before twelve.

Miss Mellon, who could not, or did not, on account of the distance of Holly Lodge, ever make her morning appearance at the theatre before noon, applied successfully to the manager to alter the appointed hour to suit her convenience. This justly offended the jolly representative of *Falstaff*, who entreated the prompter to remonstrate on an alteration which, as many of the performers had gone home, would (besides being unpleasant to him) occasion much non-attendance.

The prompter went to the manager's room, where he found Miss Mellon, and having expressed his own opinion that it looked rather like trifling with the business to permit such unnecessary change of

\* This was a short engagement made with Stephen Kemble, and for the plays in which he performed he was stage-manager. The anecdote does not relate to the time when he was for an entire season the actual manager.

arrangements, he added, that it was besides a poor compliment to a "visitor," as Stephen Kemble might be termed.

The manager hesitated; then the lady merrily exclaimed, "Stephen Kemble may go to Old Scratch, and you with him! Or, if you don't like that, take old Fatty home with you, give him a supper (which I will pay for), and send to my place for half-a-dozen of my best champagne."

"Thank you, Madam!" exclaimed the *great* Newcastle manager, who popped his head in at the door, behind which he had stood to hear the success of the prompter's intervention; "thank you, Madam; I accept your hospitality; and you may alter the stated hour of every rehearsal, while I stay, *at the same price!*"

During the rest of this season Miss Mellon appeared in many of her best characters; but her *Muslin*, in "The Way to Keep Him;" her *Mrs. Candour*, in "The School for Scandal;" and *Audrey*, in "As you Like it," were triumphantly successful.

### CHAPTER III.

Commencement of season in 1814—List of company—Edmund Kean—His poverty—Miss Mellon his secret benefactor—His first appearance—Advises him about his engagements—The two bonds—Kean's Othello—Mrs. Siddons and the imperfect Young Norval—Kean's Richard III.—Present from Mr. Coutts.

THE season commencing in 1814 opened with one of the most brilliant companies ever perhaps assembled within the walls of Drury Lane Theatre. We subjoin a list of the performers :—

For Light Comedy.	{	Elliston
	{	Rae
	{	Wrench
	{	Russell
	{	Holland
For Walking Gentlemen and Sentimentalists.	{	De Camp
	{	Wallack
	{	J. Wallack
	{	Barnard

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For Low Comedy.	{	Bannister
		Lovegrove
	{	Oxberry
		Knight
For Old Men and Eccentrics.	{	Munden
		Dowton
	{	Gatty
		Penley
For Opera.	{	Wewitzer
		Braham
	{	T. Phillips
		Pyne
Ladies for Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, Opera, and Melodrama.	{	J. Smith
		G. Smith
	{	Bellamy
		Miss Smith, now Mrs. Bartley
		Mrs. Glover
		Mrs. Davison
		Mrs. Edwin
		Mrs. Orger
		Mrs. Mountain
	{	Mrs. Dickens
		Miss Poole
		Miss Kelly
		Miss Walstein
		Mrs. Bland
		Mrs. Harlowe
		Mrs. Sparks
	{	Miss Mellon

With a company so unprecedentedly numerous and talented no one performer could expect to stand out as a leading figure ; but amidst this host of

stars it was destined that one should appear in the theatrical hemisphere which, blazing upon the town like a comet, outshone all the lesser lights. The year 1814 is rendered memorable by the first appearance of Edmund Kean.

The presentiment of Miss Mellon's leaving the stage became so strong at this time as materially to injure her professional advancement, her remaining in the theatre being considered so very uncertain that the management avoided giving her any part in a new piece. Thus, in 1814, when Mr. Poole's farce of "Intrigue" was to be brought out, Miss Mellon, who had seen the MS. (probably at the prompt table), was desirous of appearing as *Ellen*, but it was not deemed politic to assign it to her, so Miss Kelly, then comparatively an untried actress, had the part.

As in the early part of this year Kean appeared, all other persons ceased to be of any interest to the management. Any short farce, no matter whether new or old, answered the purpose on his nights; and on those in which he did not appear there was a comedy company unequalled either before or since.

But in the standard comedies and farces Miss Mellon played as often as anyone, especially in those which were produced for Bannister, who was preparing the public for his departure by perform-



ing *Dick*, *Walter*, *Baron Willinghurst*, *Lenetive*, and all the other parts that he had exclusively made his own.

It has been stated that Miss Mellon's services were not put in requisition for *Ellen*, in the "Intrigue," lest her suddenly leaving the stage might prove injurious to its run; and this system of exclusion was further carried out with regard to a sort of military romp, in a clever farce called "Past Ten o'Clock, and a Rainy Night." This character was written for Miss Mellon, whose style and person were (or, perhaps, speaking of 1814, it might be said, had been) admirably adapted for it. By desire of the committee, however, Mrs. Edwin obtained the part; and the farce was delayed until Miss Mellon's retirement, which had become a topic of green-room gossip.

On the 26th of January, 1814, after many heart-sickening delays and a hard struggle against poverty, Edmund Kean made his first bow to a London audience. The following particulars relating to him and Miss Mellon will be found interesting:—

The history of Mr. Kean's arrival in London early in November, 1813, and his being from that time until the last week of January without funds, is a sad tale, too well known to need comment, beyond merely recapitulating that it arose from his having partially accepted engagements for two theatres,

under different managers, Messrs. Raymond and Elliston. These gentlemen were on terms of intimacy, which gave facility to their mutual explanations, and therefore it was clearly understood that nothing unhandsome had taken place as regarded each other, but Kean was the neglected party by both.

During those miserable three months of uncertainty Mr. Kean's family had to be maintained in London lodgings; and it is recorded of their excellent landladies that, instead of pressing a demand for rent, they waited, without any remark, except some encouraging prophecy of hope for the future. Still, though free from the pressure of this one expense, the stranger had to encounter all the others attendant on house-keeping and making a creditable appearance, while the two treasurers still denied his claim, with the exception of one weekly payment. Contemporary theatrical writers, who were aware of his straitened circumstances, have expressed an opinion that he must have had considerable assistance from some private quarter to have obtained the superior style of dress which he very properly assumed while seeking his position amidst the profession; for the *first* entrée of the gifted man had been in a great coat with large capes, composed of the coarse grey cloth used for soldiers' rough clothing. They add that "his candour and grati-

tude were so excessive respecting these sort of obligations in early days, that he must have been indebted to some source whose secrecy was well maintained or he would surely have referred to the circumstance."

The individual is living who was the channel of conveying to the distressed family the timely aid which alone could have enabled Mr. Kean to "bide his time" through the managerial uncertainties. His anonymous benefactor was—Miss Mellon.

She was perfectly acquainted with the circumstances of the misunderstanding, from it being the theme of green-room discussion.\* She heard by chance that the disappointed, struggling actor had a wife and family in London without friends or support. This was just a highly-wrought case of distress to excite her romantic liberality, and she therefore sent the young lady who lived with her, on whose secrecy she could rely (fearful of trusting a servant's discretion), to leave an anonymous donation of £50 at 21, Cecil Street, Strand, for Mr. Kean's family. Miss Mellon even took the precaution of requesting the lady to proceed on foot to the house, and her plain carriage was left at some distance in the Strand to prevent discovery.

On the morning of Kean's first appearance she

\* Or more probably from Miss Tidswell, her own intimate friend, and Kean's reputed aunt.

was introduced to him during the rehearsal, at her own request ; of her motive there can be no doubt. He appeared distressed. Oxberry, who knew Kean, introduced them : Kean, perhaps, guessed her intention—be this as it may, his manner was such, that it is believed she feared she might rather wound than soothe his feelings. Kean always spoke of her in terms of admiration, and he was so truly a democrat, that he could seldom be brought to utter a word in favour of the rich, be they whom they might. Her kindness (for in the forlorn situation in which a poor, ill-used, and ill-dressed provincial actor stands at our national theatres, even to speak to him is a kindness) was strongly contrasted to, and not improbably caused by the cruel and uncalled-for observations of an actress of great histrionic merit, who “wondered where the little wretch had been picked up !” and even went the length of advising him “to return to the country, for amid such actors as surrounded him he could have no chance.”

At night, Miss Mellon attended, with great interest, the *début* of her unconscious *protégé*. After his brilliant success she went behind the scenes, accompanied by the same party, to congratulate Mr. Kean on the effect he had produced. She then added, “I have heard sir, that you have been offered here an engagement at eight, nine, and ten pounds per week for three successive years.” Mr. Kean

replied, "Such was Mr. Raymond's proposition." "And have you signed the articles?" Miss Mellon inquired. He answered in the negative, but he would do so after the performance that night. "I request you earnestly not to do so, Mr. Kean," was her remarkable reply; "defer it until you have played another night, and you are better able to calculate respecting your own prospects. Take the advice of one who understands theatrical arrangements, and be not hasty to-night in signing your articles." Wishing him cordially success, she withdrew, and he heard nothing further of her; but he took her advice as to deferring the signature to the articles of agreement.

He played *Shylock* again the following week twice; and, on the morning succeeding the third performance, Mr. Whitbread requested to see him relative to signing the articles. These were for but *eight pounds per week*, and the man of genius felt that his efforts were worth more; but he had been twice disappointed; therefore, fearful of losing another chance, he replied in the affirmative to Mr. Whitbread's demand—Was he ready to abide by the arrangement? On which Mr. Whitbread instantly destroyed the document, and handed him over another paper, which gave him an engagement for twenty pounds per week instead of eight!

Kean was deeply affected by this tribute to his

talent and honour, and, although the committee would probably have done the same had he signed the other paper at first, he frequently thought of the prophetic kindness of Miss Mellon, which had suggested the hope of increased remuneration by waiting.

Miss Tidswell, who had brought up the late Mr. Kean from his infancy, and who is stated to have been married to his father's brother, was particularly anxious, when he appeared, that his acting should obtain the stamp of approbation from the Kemble family ; and on his announcement for *Othello*, Mr. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons expressed an intention of seeing the new actor, which made his faithful friend very nervous. Mrs. Siddons had performed with him at Cork when he was quite a lad, and had thence acquired (very naturally) a strong prejudice against him, for he was so imperfect in *Young Norval* to her *Lady Randolph* that she and the prompter supplied the majority of the words. Like all persons of successful genius, her whole thoughts were devoted to the profession she followed ; therefore the indifference of an actor not even taking the trouble of committing the mere words to memory was inexcusable in her eyes ; and Miss Tidswell had been told that Mrs. Siddons had decided that the person who had attempted to act with her at Cork was past all hope of succeeding in his profession.

During the play, Miss Tidswell placed herself opposite to the box in which Mr. Kemble and his sister were sitting in judgment on her *élève*, their actions during the performance being of paramount interest to her. The queen of tragedy sat erect and looking cold ; Mr. Kemble giving a grave attention ; but as the young actor warmed to his theme, Mrs. Siddons showed a pleased surprise, and at last leaned forward her fine head on her arm, quite engrossed in the scene ; while Mr. Kemble expressed continual approbation, turning to his sister as each point told.

After the triumphant close of the performance, Kean's anxious relative approached the Kembles' box, so as to overhear their criticisms. Mrs. Siddons, from the total change of acting, aided by the splendid dress, would not allow that it was the same lad who had played *Norval* so stupidly at Cork ; she said, perhaps the latter had assumed the name of Kean. " Then the present one has every right to drop it," said Mr. Kemble ; " he is not Kean, but the *real Othello* ! "

When Miss Tidswell reproachfully asked Mr. Kean the cause of Mrs. Siddons having such an impression as to his stupidity at Cork, he quietly replied, " She was quite right ; for I had been on board a ship in the harbour, and had returned scarcely able to stand on the stage, much less to utter speeches ! "



Miss Mellon witnessed Kean's first London appearance in "Richard the Third," in company with Mr. Coutts, who was so much struck with the actor's genius, and delighted with his performance, that he hastened behind the scenes, and presented the tragedian with a gold watch and a hundred guineas.

Although Miss Mellon had been the benefactress of Mr. Kean, without his being aware of it, they were never intimately acquainted. She never performed in tragedy on the London stage, therefore their professional engagements were not cast together; and the unfortunate social tastes of Mr. Kean rendered him ineligible as a visitor. After her marriage, it has been stated that he was frequently invited to dinner by Mr. Coutts; but this (although the old gentleman admired his professional talents excessively) is erroneous; the dissimilarity of their habits having been so forcibly contrasted that familiar intercourse could not have afforded pleasure to either party.

The kindness shown by the Duchess of St. Albans, since 1836, to Mr. Kean's son was, therefore, quite independent of any former intimacy with his father, and arose solely from hearing that he was a young man of great talent, who felt the want of patronage to place him at once in a prominent position.



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The duchess having suffered under a similar disadvantage in her own early career, her sympathy was awakened for any youthful aspirants thus situated to save them from this disheartening drawback, and she exerted her interest and influence in Charles Kean's favour during his provincial engagements, procuring him introductions to the principal families of the different neighbourhoods, so as to place him everywhere in the best society.

## CHAPTER IV.

The private box—A misunderstanding—A new dressing-room—Audrey, in “As you Like it”—Miss Mellon’s last appearance—Copy of the play-bill—Retrospect of Miss Mellon’s theatrical career—False estimates of her character.

TOWARDS the close of this year Miss Mellon’s intention of retiring was so well known that the actresses were day by day speculating on the event. In addition to Bannister, Wroughton was on the eve of leave-taking; the three performers were therefore of course common topics of conversation with those who, by obtaining the reversion of some capital parts, became interested in their adieux. Lovegrove, Russell, and De Camp were almost sure to succeed to a vast portion of Bannister’s characters; Raymond and Holland to those played by Wroughton; and Miss Kelly and Mrs. Orger of course anticipated sharing between them the *Nells* and the *Cowslips* hitherto possessed by Miss Mellon.

Miss Mellon wished to make her last curtsy in *Volante*, which circumstances prevented her from doing. Miss Walstein had just appeared, and it was Lent. Kean acted three nights per week, Miss Walstein one, and the oratorios filled the other two. As Miss Walstein was to be played against Miss O'Neill, she had the choice of her own parts. *Juliana* was not one in which she excelled, and as the management were making every endeavour to establish her in public favour, it would have been very injudicious to have enacted "The Honeymoon" with Mrs. Davison (the original) *Juliana*, as it would only have served to remind the public that there was a much better actress than Miss Walstein already in the theatre.

On January the 4th, 1815, Miss Mellon played *Mrs. Candour* in the "School for Scandal." As this was her second-best part, it was thought she would retire in it, but she was not improbably deterred by an ill-natured newspaper paragraph that intimated "she would cease to play *Mrs. Candour* in public, and commence playing *Lady Teazle* in private life." She repeated *Mrs. Candour* on the 18th and 25th, played *Audrey* on the 1st of February, and having then hurriedly resolved to leave the stage, urged the performance of "The Honeymoon." The management were anxious to oblige her; but unluckily, beside the injury to Miss Walstein,

another difficulty arose. Elliston, who had been cast as *Bolingbroke* in "Richard the Second," became part-sick, would do nothing he was asked to do, and, in fact, made himself so intolerably disagreeable that the managers had no wish to do anything that would bring them in collision with him. There was no other *Duke Aranza* in the house, and the idea of presenting the comedy was immediately abandoned. On the 7th of February, therefore, Miss Mellon took her leave of the stage she had adorned for nearly twenty years, as *Audrey*, in "As you Like it."

Before circumstantially recording the retirement of Miss Mellon, some unpleasant circumstances attending it deserve to be noticed.

Miss Mellon's unfortunate hastiness in selecting friends, and equal hastiness in taking offence, caused several professional differences, which made enemies for life of those she had known intimately, and who had the power, as well as the inclination, to misrepresent many of her actions which had originated in good motives. Her success in life excited the envious malignity of the less fortunate, and those whose society she relinquished at the desire of Mr. Coutts never forgave the wound to their vanity. To the officials at Drury Lane she was of course well known, and one of them used frequently to be invited to her theatrical dinner parties, but in conse-

quence of some report of a great intimacy between him and a lady staying in her house, which incensed Mr. Coutts (though beyond the purpose of this work to examine further), the old gentleman insisted that both parties should cease to be admitted to Miss Mellon's house. During the time the Drury Lane Company played at the Lyceum, Mr. Coutts took a box there, and after the new Drury Lane Theatre was opened, the same parties still continued to keep the Lyceum, soliciting the late subscribers to renew their patronage for the ensuing season. Among others they wrote to Mr. Coutts, who agreed to continue his box for one year.

It appeared in the subsequent year that Mr. Coutts considered the boxes at Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Opera, as sufficient without the Lyceum; therefore, as theatrical applications to him were generally made through Miss Mellon, he desired her, in case of any communication about the box at the small theatre, to decline it in his name. No application, however, reached Miss Mellon at the beginning of the year, although one had been made at the opening of each season; therefore it was concluded the box had been let otherwise. Mr. Coutts was, however, perfectly astonished at the close of the season to receive a demand for the rent of the box, into which not an individual of his acquaintance had entered, and which he had not

even been offered for his choice. He therefore refused paying for what he had neither used nor engaged, and which had not even been offered to him as hitherto. The party strenuously denied ever having written on any occasion to offer the box to Mr. Coutts, and Miss Mellon, in her hasty manner, insisted they *had* done so, and that the letters for each year were among her theatrical papers.

Notwithstanding her assertion, he warmly denied what she said, and they had extremely high words; but the matter was settled by her producing the very letters which he said had never been written. In consequence of this singular mistake, Mr. Coutts more firmly decided not to pay what he considered an attempt to take advantage of him; and the party having been defeated through Miss Mellon's means, of course became additionally hostile to her.

It will not readily be supposed how numerous are the annoyances it is in the power of dramatic officials to inflict, from which there can be no appeal. One of these which Miss Mellon encountered was, having her dressing-room shared with an individual who was disagreeable to her, and who, being reported to be a particular friend of her annoyer, Mr. Coutts did not consider a fitting associate for her. Frequently when she arrived to dress, she found the door locked, and as every room belonging to the theatre was wanted, at dressing time, by its usual occupant, she

was obliged to collect the requisite articles in haste, and dress, as best she could, in the ante-room of Mr. Coutts's box, thus precluding the entry of any one to the box, to which the only ingress was through this drawing-room. This was so extremely inconvenient for herself, and for those who might have wished to enter the box, which was thus rendered useless, that she resolved to throw up her engagement. Mr. Raymond very sensibly urged her not to do so, saying, that any person who sought means of annoying her would be but too glad to make her relinquish the engagement, so that she might incur the forfeit of £1,000, in which sum she was bound to fulfil it.

Accordingly she went as usual; and the next attempted annoyance was, the cast of her principal characters being given to others, as may be seen by the Drury Lane books; but this was rather a relief, for it spared her trouble and the *disagreeables* of the dressing-room; so thus matters stood just before and at the time of Miss Mellon's retirement.

On the 7th of February, Miss Mellon was announced to perform *Audrey*, in "As you Like it;" on repairing to her dressing-room she found the door was locked; but as she had brought her costume, she dressed in the ante-room of the private box.

Mr. Coutts, whose great delight was to attend the

theatre, fancied himself to be sufficiently well to be present at the performance; and he arrived soon after the play had commenced. Miss Mellon was considered the handsomest *Audrey* on the stage, the French peasant costume suiting her style. On this evening her dress was extremely fanciful and pretty, being a peculiar-shaped black velvet hat, a yellow jacket laced with black velvet, and a gold cross and heart on her throat; while the striped, full, and rather short petticoat, revealed very neat feet and ankles, in little buckled shoes, and yellow silk stockings with black clocks.

She was greeted with much applause, as being a favourite of the audience, and one who had not lately been much before them; so that, when the early scenes were over, she went to speak to Mr. Coutts, flushed with success, and hoping for his compliment also.

She was, however, disappointed in finding his kind countenance wearing a serious expression, as, taking her hand, he said that he could not allow her to appear thus again.

In dismay she inquired what was his meaning, and he explained that he could not bear to see her "made up" for the stage, and in such an absurd costume. He therefore hoped this would be her last appearance.

His requests were so few, and she always had



attended to them with such deference for his better judgment, that the matter of her retirement was settled from that moment : all originating perhaps in the “smart little yellow stockings with black clocks.” She returned to the stage for her final scene, and at its close, having whispered to the astonished *Touchstone* that “she should never again be his *Audrey*,” she stepped rather in advance of the other performers, curtsied profoundly several times to the applauding audience, not as *Audrey*, but as Miss Mellon, and such was the sole intimation and leave-taking of her *last appearance*.

Out of the performers named in the accompanying copy of the play-bill in which Miss Mellon's name last appeared as an actress, seventeen persons are no more, and six, though living, have retired from the stage.

Last night but one of Miss Walstein's engagement.

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

This present Thursday, Feb. 7th, 1815,

Their Majesty's servants will perform Shakspeare's comedy of

### AS YOU LIKE IT.

Duke	...	...	...	Mr. Carr.
Frederick	...	...	...	Mr. Maddocks.
Amiens	...	...	...	Mr. Pyne.
Jacques	...	...	...	Mr. Wroughton.
Oliver	...	...	...	Mr. Waldegrave.
Adam	...	...	...	Mr. Powell.
Orlando	...	...	...	Mr. Rae.

(His second appearance in that character.)

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Le Beau	...	...	...	Mr. Fisher.
Jacques de Bois	...	...	...	Mr. Miller.
Touchstone	...	...	...	Mr. Bannister.
Dennis	...	...	...	Mr. Chatterly.
Silvius	...	...	...	Mr. Barnard.
William	...	...	...	Mr. Penley.
Charles	...	...	...	Mr. Cooke.
Rosalind	...	...	...	Miss Walstein.

(Her second appearance in that character, and positively the last night but one of her engagement.)

Celia	...	...	...	Mrs. Horn.
Phœbe	...	...	...	Miss Boyce.
Audrey	...	...	...	Miss Mellon.

In act five, a song by Mrs. Bland.

To which will be added, twenty-sixth time, a new musical romance in two acts, called

### THE NINTH STATUE ;

OR,

### THE IRISHMAN IN BAGDAD.

Zeyn (Prince of Balsora)	...	...	...	Mr. J. Wallack.
Kilrooney (an Irish traveller)	...	...	...	Mr. Johnstone.
Bouluker Moussin (a dervise of Bagdad)	...	...	...	Mr. Oxberry.
Morabec (a benevolent magician)	...	...	...	Mr. Gattie.
Pandac (a nobleman of Balsora)	...	...	...	Mr. Smith.
Asdrael (king of the Genii)	...	...	...	Mr. Waldegrave.
Iman	...	...	...	Mr. Maddocks.
Officer of the guard	...	...	...	Mr. Chatterly.
Alcocomb (a princess of Bagdad)	...	...	...	Miss Boyce.
Nora (daughter of Kilrooney)	...	...	...	Miss Kelly.
Musca	...	...	...	Miss Cooke.
Gulna	...	...	...	Miss Tidswell.

It is respectfully announced, that on Monday next Mr. Kean will perform, for the first time, the part of *Reuben Glenroy*, in the comedy of “*Town and Country*.”

Miss Walstein and Miss Kelly are also "underlined" to reappear. Still there was no official notice of Miss Mellon's having left the stage, although those who are conversant with the usages of the theatre might deem the following cast of "The Honeymoon" to amount to it:—

On Friday, May 5th,

### THE HONEYMOON.

Rolando	...	...	...	Mr. De Camp.
Count	...	...	...	Mr. Holland.
Lampedo	...	...	...	Mr. Oxberry.
Volante	...	...	...	Miss Kelly.

(Being her first appearance in that character.)

After this, Miss Kelly assumed many parts that had formerly been in the hands of Miss Mellon. Mrs. Glover got *Estifania* and Mrs. Rackett, and Mrs. Orger added to her list some of the younger characters, many of which, by-the-bye—such as *Charlotte*, in "The Apprentice;" *Ruth*, in "Honest Thieves"—Miss Mellon had given up in 1812, when her *embonpoint* unfitted her for looking them any longer. *Annette*, in "Blue Devils," she long before resigned to Miss Kelly, observing to the stage-manager when asking to be taken out of it, "My dear Wroughton, what would they say to hear a large woman like me exclaim, 'I shall be eighteen next Friday fortnight.'"

Miss Mellon's theatrical career in London embraces a period of twenty years, perhaps the most

interesting in the history of the modern stage, from the number of successful candidates for public favour it produced ; and having always had a great anxiety to be present at first appearances, as well as from the uniform kindness evinced by her to *débutants*, she thus created many friendships, which only ceased with the lives of the parties. Mrs. Sparks\* always spoke of her attentions when she, on the 26th October, 1797, stood a trembling candidate for public favour at the wings of Drury Lane ; Miss Mellon, whether her services were required or not, made it a sort of rule to be present on such occasions. If we except the era of Garrick, she had seen the best actors of which our stage can boast—the Kembles in their zenith, and Lewis, Suett, Parsons, Dodd, when their powers were matured.

She witnessed the first appearances at Drury Lane of Mr. Samuel Russell, who has been forty-two years on the London stage, and is now the stage-manager of the theatre in which he made his *début* ; of Cooper, now in New York, and commonly called the Anglo-American actor ; of the veteran Downton, who appeared in 1796 ; of Betterton, the father of Mrs. Glover, who died five years since, at a very advanced age ; the reappearance of the great Mrs. Crawford,

\* Miss Tidswell, Kean's aunt, is another contemporary who speaks most highly of Miss Mellon. On her retirement the duchess gave her a life annuity.

once Mrs. Damer, afterwards Mrs. Barry (this was at Covent Garden); of Raymond, who died while stage-manager of Drury Lane, and who, from the period of his first appearance (1799) to the day of his death, was, with Wewitzer, her confidential friend and adviser; of Miss Kelly, the great Miss Kelly, when she, a child, played the *Duke of York* to the *Richard* of Kemble; of Mrs. Liston, when, as Miss Tyrer, she appeared also in the same year as *Beda*, for the benefit of Mrs. Crouch; of Madame Mara, when she *condescended* to sing upon the English stage; of poor Cherry; of Bartley; of Master Betty; of Miss Duncan, now Mrs. Davison, with whom she was at one time on terms of the fondest friendship and intimacy; of Miss Fearon (Mrs. Glossop), then called the little Catalani; of Madame Storace, and many others.

Miss Mellon also witnessed the efforts of Elliston when commencing his career, and she had watched the early metropolitan efforts of Munden, Emery, Fawcett, Dowton, Jones, Matthews, Liston, Terry, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. H. Johnston, Mrs. H. Siddons, Mrs. Davison, Mrs. Edwin, Miss O'Neill, and Miss Foote; of Rae; of Mrs. Orger; of Riley, author of "The Itinerant;" of Horn the singer; Messrs. Knight, Wrench, Oxberry, Howard Payne, T. Cooke, Tokely; of Mrs. Edwin; and of Edmund Kean.

In the same period, or at least up to her own retirement, she had been a tearful witness of the leave-taking of many of the greatest actors and actresses of the time. She had seen Dodd's last performance, in 1796 ; Bensley's in the same year ; the retirement of Mrs. John Kemble, and of Miss Farren, afterwards Lady Derby ; of old Charles Bannister, in her (Miss M.'s) second season ; and of his son's, John Bannister's, within three or four months of her own ; of Mrs. Abingdon, whose style of acting she is thought by many to have made peculiarly her model ; of the veteran Tom King, who quitted the stage in 1802, after having ornamented it for half a century ; of Miss Brunton (Lady Craven) ; of Miss Pope, by whose secession she obtained a very important cast of characters.

It was reported that Miss Mellon was rather profuse in the expenses of the table ; but this report, carried beyond its real extent, was often greatly overrated. It should have been added that whatever she enjoyed, she was ever most liberal in imparting to others ; and that at her own table she was the genius of hospitality personified. When form rendered it necessary, no one could more pleasingly assume the manners and deportment of a thoroughly well-bred female ; and when a birth-night or a holiday festival tolerated a degree of relaxation from the frigidities of unbending ceremony, no one

\*

assisted at a dance, a Dutch concert, or a game of forfeits, with greater or more naïve hilarity than Miss Mellon.

Mr. Dibdin informs us, “that he and his wife have at Christmas vacations frequently accompanied her to a neat little cottage which Mr. De Camp tenanted on Finchley Common ; whence, after dinner, the party have masqueraded it to the snug neighbouring dwelling of the never-to-be-forgotten Joseph Grimaldi, where the pleasures of the evening (and of many similar ones) were not only rationally comic, but always ending in *some good being done for somebody*, by the kind woman who had not yet attained to the opulence of Mrs. Coutts, or the exalted rank of the Duchess of St. Albans.

“Much has been insinuated” (he continues) “as to the supposed partiality for ostentation displayed in many of her liberalities ; but even if this misrepresentation were true, it is no real foundation for making such hypothetical drawback a cause of blame. Example is of some value, and it is good on some occasions not ‘to put your candle under a bushel.’ Her own profession (from many of whom this censure has been disseminated) must acknowledge that, while very many highly-respected actors have become extremely rich, and many virtuous and deserving actresses have been espoused by nobility and men of large possessions, very few, if any, have

had the kind retrospection to assist or patronize their former professional associates ; or, if they have done so, the subject has been seldom manifested by any ostentatious display of gratitude on the part of the recipients of their bounty.

“ Be this as it may, we remember ” (continues Mr. Dibdin) “ to have heard Miss Mellon much blamed for her fondness for publicity respecting her good deeds, in a conversation in Drury Lane green-room, in which the person who acted as censor did it very ungratefully, as he had been more indebted to that lady’s pecuniary kindness than to any other member of the theatre.”



## CHAPTER V.

Miss Mellon a good example to actresses—The first Mrs Coutts—Misrepresentations concerning her—Earl Dundonald's refutation of them—The Duke of Clarence and the first Mrs. Coutts.—The egg and the alligator—Death of Mr. Coutts's first wife—Singular announcement of that event to Miss Mellon—Mr. Coutts's illness, and result of it—Marriage of Mr. Coutts to Miss Mellon.

AN idea is often entertained by persons who really have talents for the theatre, that they have only to "come out" to succeed, and to retain a place in the estimation of the public, throughout a brilliant and lucrative career. The progress of Miss Mellon, as we have traced it, from her poverty-beset childhood up to the zenith of her popularity, will be of great use in correcting that too-frequently indulged notion. We have seen that, notwithstanding a strong inclination for the stage, the possession of personal graces and natural advantages calculated to adorn it, and the constant practice and unremitting study of her profession, it was many years

before she reaped her reward. She took the difficult but sure path to success, which is only to be traversed by the most assiduous perseverance, careful study, and constant attention to the duties of the art. By the undeviating exercise of all these rules, the subject of our memoir has left an example to the young and struggling members of the arduous profession, which cannot be too closely imitated.

Having followed Miss Mellon to the close of her dramatic career, we must now, to preserve the thread of the narrative, relate some particulars concerning Mr. Coutts's first wife.

Every person connected with Mr. Coutts seems to have been marked out for misrepresentation. This originated, no doubt, in the revengeful spirit of disappointed applicants for pecuniary aid; who, finding no immediate point of attack offered by the character of the old gentleman himself, directed their malice against the objects of his regard, concerning whom he would most likely be vulnerable.

For years there had been a series of unfounded reports afloat relating to the individual, a native of Scotland, who was the mother of his three daughters; and there is a great pleasure in here contradicting these falsehoods regarding one who seems to have been respectable in her own humble station, while living in the household of the brother of Mr. Coutts, in the Strand.

A published detail of the circumstances, by the late Earl of Dundonald, will rectify these misrepresentations; and from his lordship's account, it will seem doubtful whether she ever lived in any menial capacity with Mr. Coutts. With regard to any previous situations, it must be remembered, that the Scotch are most industrious, thrifty people, who place out their families in very humble capacities, to begin their career.

Another most unfair charge was, that she obtained enormous sums of money from Mr. Coutts, for the advancement of her own family, who were described as "having fastened on him like locusts." This charge against her integrity is perfectly rebutted by the circumstance (communicated by a contributor from Scotland desirous to justify the deceased), that some relations now living, in her own country, are still in the same original humble situation as prior to her acquaintance with Mr. Coutts. Indeed, after her demise, it was well known that her own niece applied to Mr. Coutts, stating her extreme poverty (which does not look like great family-appropriation), and the old gentleman allowed her a certain sum while he lived.\*

\* This sum, we learn, was increased after his demise by the late duchess, until the death of the individual, and the latter had been enabled to save from it £700 or £800; and this sum is probably the sole ground for the report that her own family was lavishly supplied with money by the first Mrs. Coutts.

Finally, with reference to her having been entitled legally to bear the banker's name, the assertion that Mr. Coutts did not ever make her his wife, *must* be untrue—first, from the parties to whom he introduced her; then, from the Earl of Dundonald, his intimate friend, speaking of the matter, as will be seen in his letter; and lastly, from the strongest fact of all, namely, that if in late years Mr. Coutts had not been her husband, what prevented him from at once settling an annuity on her, and marrying Miss Mellon, to whom he was doubtless engaged, after the failure of intellect in the parent of his daughters.

All unprejudiced parties must admit the self-evident strength of the foregoing truths; and when some malicious person, on the demise of Mr. Coutts, published a pretended memoir of him, and quoted the Earl of Dundonald as “the authority for, and corroboration of, some statements therein,” his lordship published in a morning paper the following letter in his own vindication, explaining the real history which had been so shamefully perverted:—

#### LETTER FROM THE EARL OF DUNDONALD.

“A small pamphlet having lately come under my eye, entitled, ‘*The Life of Thomas Coutts, Esq., with biographical and entertaining Anecdotes of his*

*first Wife ; by a person of the first respectability,*’ I feel myself called upon publicly to refute those anecdotes which the author states to have been communicated *by me*.

“The late Thomas Coutts’s father came originally from Dundee ; so far his biographer is accurate ; but his other statements are incorrect. He was a merchant (not a banker), and carried on business in Edinburgh. What is now termed ‘banker’ was not known in those days. He married a daughter of Sir John Stuart, of Allan Bank, in Berwickshire ; and Sir John Stuart’s mother was a daughter of Mr. Ker, of Morrison, in the same county ; and Mr. Ker’s mother was Miss Grizzle Cochrane, daughter of Sir John Cochrane, second son of William, first Earl of Dundonald.

“A singular circumstance attended this lady, which may not be generally known, but deserves to be recorded as an almost unexampled instance of female heroism and filial affection.

“I cannot exactly ascertain whether the fact I am about to relate happened before or after her marriage with Mr. Ker, of Morrison, but I rather think it was previous to that event.

“Sir John Cochrane, being engaged in Argyle’s rebellion against James the Second, was taken prisoner after a desperate resistance, and condemned to be hanged.

“His daughter having notice that the death-warrant was expected from London, attired herself in men’s clothes, and twice attacked and robbed the mails (between Bedford and Berwick) which conveyed the death-warrants; thus delaying the execution, giving time to Sir John Cochrane’s father, the Earl of Dundonald, to make interest with Father Peter (a Jesuit), King James’s confessor, who for the sum of five thousand pounds agreed to intercede with his royal master in favour of Sir John Cochrane, and to procure his pardon, which was effected. Her great-granddaughter, Miss Stuart, of Allan Bank, married the late Mr. Thomas Coutts’s father, and they had four sons, Peter, John, James, and Thomas.

“Peter followed the same line as his father, and died unmarried, after a confinement for nearly thirty years in the lunatic asylum at Hackney. John also followed his father’s business, and succeeded him in the firm; he had very delicate health, and he also died unmarried, between thirty and forty years of age. James, the third brother, likewise followed his father’s business, and was a partner in a house in London (in St. Mary Axe) corresponding with the house of John Coutts and Co., Edinburgh.

“In the year 1754 or 1755, he married the only daughter of Mr. Peagram, who was a partner in the

house of Middleton and Campbell, afterwards Campbell and Peagrim, the shop the same as at present occupied by Coutts and Company. Mr. James Coutts became a partner in that house, and on the death of Campbell succeeded to the whole concern. Mr. James Coutts had only one child, a daughter, who afterwards married her cousin-german, Sir John Stuart, of Allan Bank. Mr. James Coutts was for a short time member of parliament for the city of Edinburgh, but in consequence of some strange and incoherent language he used in the House of Commons, he was induced (at the suggestion of, and by the persuasion of his friends) to refrain from attending that house. On his mental faculties, as well as his bodily health, becoming much impaired, he was advised to visit a more favourable climate, and, under the care of his uncle's wife, Lady Stuart, and her son, repaired to Italy, where a marriage was soon formed between Mr. James Coutts's only daughter and her cousin, Mr. Stuart. Miss Coutts's fortune was from seventy to eighty thousand pounds. I do not at present recollect whether Mr. James Coutts died abroad, or in his native country.

“Mr. Thomas Coutts, the youngest of the four sons, was a partner in the house at St. Mary Axe, and afterwards admitted as a partner into his brother's banking-house in the Strand. Here he



(Mr. Thomas Coutts) became acquainted with his first wife, a most respectable, modest, handsome young woman, who had the care of Mr. James Coutts's only daughter.

“When Mr. Thomas Coutts married, it was said that he had thereby much offended his brother James, but still the brothers continued their partnership. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Coutts resided in St. Martin's Lane, in the house occupied by the late Dr. Garthshore. There my brothers and myself have frequently called to visit Mr. and Mrs. Coutts. Her good sense, amiable disposition, and exemplary good conduct, endeared her to all her husband's family, and commanded the respect of everyone who knew her.

“Since the year 1785 or 1786, I have never seen Mrs. Coutts. She was then in Scotland with her husband and her three daughters, at that period all unmarried. They were on a visit at my cousin's, Mr. Charles Preston of Vallefield, by whose invitation I went to meet them at dinner. Since then, to my recollection, Mrs. Coutts and I have never met; nor did I ever in my life apply to that lady for pecuniary relief for myself or any branch of my family.

“With respect to Mr. Thomas Coutts's *age*, I rather think his biographer has stated that incorrectly. In former days he was always reckoned



to be *seventeen years older* than *myself*, which would bring him to *ninety-one* at the period of his decease, instead of eighty-seven, as therein stated.

“I cannot regret the chance which has thrown in my way ‘*The Life of Thomas Coutts, Esq., by a person of the first respectability,*’ as it has enabled me to refute the errors and correct the misstatements which the *author* has given to the public as *facts communicated by me*.

“I am sorry to have taken up so much of your valuable paper, and beg to subscribe myself,

“Sir, your very obedient servant,

“DUNDONALD.

“March, 1822.”

Even near the time of the demise of Mrs. Coutts, though she had grandchildren grown up, she exhibited traces of having possessed some personal advantages in her youth; her large black eyes retaining their brightness, although rather stern and wild in their expression.

For years before her death her mental faculties had quite failed, and she was reduced to a state of childishness, so that a toy or a flower would amuse her for a moment, while she was totally incapable of being interested by conversation. She possessed considerable personal strength, which, it is stated, she would employ, with the irritability of an infirm intellect, against anyone who interfered with her

wilfulness, but was apparently quite unconscious of her violence in using dangerous missiles, or whatever was within reach, against them.

Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mr. Coutts to this unfortunate lady. Testimonies of his unremitting attention to her comforts and various little whims are given by all ranks, and it is said to have been a most striking contrast to see him sitting with her, as he used during some hours daily,—the fair, thin, intelligent-looking old man,—trying to amuse his large, dark, unconscious auditor, whom he always called “Dear Mother,” while she seemed scarcely aware of his presence.

The principal drawing-room suite in Stratton Street was appropriated entirely to her use, and she had always a carriage for herself, in which Mr. Coutts frequently supplied the place of the persons appointed to take charge of her. She had constantly two most respectable attendants, and one to sit up during the night; as, after the infirmity of her intellect, she scarcely had any sleep, and was particularly restless, moving from one room to another.

So great was the dread of Mr. Coutts that she might fancy herself the least neglected, that she was placed at the head of his dinner-parties, even after the gradual decay of her faculties had disqualified her for performing any part in social intercourse.

Her loss of memory required that she should be reminded by her family when it was time to withdraw ; or, at other times, feeling restless and tired of sitting still, she would depart before the meal was concluded. She appeared, however, perfectly happy and cheerful when engaged with the trifles which interested her.

The late king, who was a frequent guest of Mr. Coutts, related an anecdote to a gentleman, who communicated it for this work, which shows the good humour of the Duke of Clarence, and the total absence of memory in Mrs. Coutts. His Royal Highness, when dining in Stratton Street, had always to take the infirm old lady down to dinner, and her regular question whispered to him as they walked together was, "Sir, are you not George the Third's *father*."

"I always answered in the affirmative," continued the duke, laughing; "I have often been told I was my father's *own son*, but never before was taken for my father's *father*! However, you know there's no use in contradicting women, young or old, eh?"

About a year before the decease of Mrs. Coutts, she suffered from failure of appetite, and her physicians prescribed for her use the almost unattainable remedy of new-laid eggs at Christmas. The London dealers received applications in vain;

it was a very severe season, and the required luxury could not be commanded.

Mr. Coutts and his daughters stated their dilemma to Miss Mellon, who also despaired of success, but determined to leave no place untried ere she would give up the search. The next morning she went before breakfast around the environs of Holly Lodge, where she was at this time sojourning, and visited every little hovel where there was even one starved-looking fowl; and after vainly asking for new-laid eggs, she promised a reward of unheard-of magnitude to her auditors if they could procure *one* for her by a certain hour each morning; the prize for *two* on the same day to increase wonderfully in amount.

Four or five mornings she went, without success, in different directions; at the end of that time, returning to her first beat she met a little boy looking out anxiously for her, bringing a snowy egg, as warm as if it had been placed by the fire. Miss Mellon, delighted at her success, covered the egg in her little satin basket and ran all through a heavy ploughed field, without stopping until she reached home, and despatched a messenger to London with the prize.

Nearly every morning similar success awaited her, the little boy being regularly found sitting on a stile, expecting her coming. At length she

happened to go earlier than usual, and not finding the child at his post, proceeded to the prolific cottage, and there discovered what extraordinary pains had been taken, and which had been rewarded with success beyond their less ingenious neighbours.

The wretched hens, hitherto starving in the frost and snow, had been promoted to the happiness of the cottage fire; a dish of warm meal and milk constantly awaited their pleasure, and the cupboards on each side of the fire were provided with deep nests made of wool. The miserable birds, who had ceased laying during the cold weather, fancied from those luxuries that summer must be come again, and that their best plan was to recommence! This they did accordingly, for the gain of their owners, the pleasure of Miss Mellon, and the benefit of poor old Mrs. Coutts.\*

Although Mrs. Coutts partially recovered her

\* Miss Mellon, whose light-hearted gaiety could be excited by the veriest trifle, felt amply compensated for her daily walk by the extraordinary conversation of the "hen-wife," who was another Mrs. Malaprop. The first specimen was when she inquired what was the husband's employment? The woman answered, "He's just got an engagement as an *alligator*, mem." "Pray what may that be, my good woman?" "He is to steer them flat ships up the canal, mem—what they calls a barge *alligator*." "Oh, I understand now: what the people at sea call a navigator; but on a canal, of course, the name alters," said Miss Mellon. "Bless'e, mem, it's all one," returned the woman.

strength from great attention, towards the autumn of 1814, her mind still remained a blank; and within a short time afterwards she perished by the result of an accident.

In the beginning of December, during the preparations for breakfast, her attendants had crossed the large drawing-room in which she always lived; it is supposed her attention had been attracted by some eggs which were boiling, and probably she had tried to reach them: a sudden cry and a sound of falling was heard, and the terrified attendants beheld the infirm woman, who had wandered to the fire, lying directly under it, across the fender. On hastening to raise her, they found she had overturned the quantity of boiling water from the eggs, all down her shoulders, arms, and chest, thereby scalding herself in a hopeless manner, past any chance of recovery.

All London was ransacked for remedies. All the skill of the faculty assembled in consultations and attendance day and night for the afflicted creature.

Mr. Coutts himself was at the time extremely ill, confined to his bed; but he made an effort, and rose with the hope of ministering to her ease if possible.

At her advanced age, however, the inflammation and its results were not to be checked, and, after lingering three weeks in such pain that those who

most loved her prayed for her release, she died at four o'clock in the morning of the 4th January, 1815.

The Duchess of St. Albans used to say of the first Mrs. Coutts, that she was an excellent wife, and most affectionate, exemplary mother; and although her education and habits might not have been of a high class, that she fulfilled the duties of those two positions in a manner creditable to herself and advantageous to her family.

Mrs. Entwisle had come to London at the close of 1814 to pass Christmas and New Year's Day with her daughter, deciding to return to Cheltenham on Twelfth Day. She had as usual come to seek money from her affectionate child; and having accomplished this maternal object, left Holly Lodge early in the morning.

After her departure, Miss Mellon (who was always superstitious, and had, moreover, an especial dread of any occurrence on Twelfth Day) described to those around her that "she was oppressed with an overwhelming presentiment that she and her beloved mother might never meet again, and that her sensations were beyond description miserable." Her kind old benefactor also had been confined to his bed for some days; she had received no accounts of him, and fancying that he might be dying also, her excitable spirits gave way, and burying her face in



the sofa pillow she wept bitterly for a length of time.

At last she heard her name feebly uttered, and, on looking up, beheld the figure of Mr. Coutts holding by the door, at which he had entered unheard. The early hour was quite unusual for his visits, which were always about two o'clock. His look was so ghastly, his tall, miserable figure so attenuated by illness, his sunken eyes and faint voice were altogether so unearthly, that Miss Mellon (who had not seen him for some days during his illness) thought he had died on the fatal Twelfth Day, and now reappeared to her. The poor man, indeed, was but little removed from death; he tottered to a chair, and saying, "*Harriot, she is dead,*" covered his face, and wept heavily.

Miss Mellon's superstitious impression was, that her mother had been killed by an accident; and the wild scene of grief which ensued was highly painful. Mr. Coutts at last had strength to explain that Mrs. Coutts was that morning released from her frightful sufferings; and, though she had long been incapable of companionship for anyone, yet being the mother of his family, he was overcome by the shock, though long expected, and, since her incurable accident, less to be regretted.

After making this communication, which he would not entrust to another, the invalid was carried down-



stairs by his servants, lifted into the carriage, and taken home to his bed.

One of the most wicked of the falsehoods told against Miss Mellon was the statement that she was married to Mr. Coutts within a few days after his first wife's death.

This statement is as false as it was revolting. The following description of the occurrence is given by those who were acquainted with the particulars.

After the decease of the first Mrs. Coutts, her husband became much worse; so that it was supposed by the medical attendants that a second funeral procession would soon follow the first.

The invalid himself was impressed with the same conviction, and seriously pressed for the opinion of the physicians who were in attendance. They could not give any permanent hope to a valetudinarian then past eighty. Among the circumstances which pressed heavily upon his mind was the idea of having prevented Miss Mellon from accepting independence in the numerous advantageous offers of marriage she had refused on his account. Her youth was passing, and although he had given ample fortunes to his daughters, yet in his dying hours he could not bequeath a reward for Miss Mellon's attention and excellent conduct without leaving grounds of slander which would turn his kindness into poison for her proud mind.

He sent for Mr. Raymond, the great friend of the Entwistles and Miss Mellon ; and stating the anxiety which pressed on his mind, requested the advice of one who knew the parties so well.

Mr. Raymond, who had a grateful feeling for all Miss Mellon's kindness to his family, was rejoiced to find this disposition for her advantage existing in Mr. Coutts. He concurred entirely in Mr. Coutts's idea that, if a sum of money were bequeathed to an actress by one who was no relation, it was immaterial how different their ages might be, her reputation would be lost by it. Therefore Miss Mellon, with all her high consciousness of unsullied conduct, would have this fact brought against her with an interpretation almost impossible to withstand.

Mr. Coutts then suggested the only alternative, namely, that they might be privately married, to give her a just claim to the sum he wished to bequeath in case of his sudden demise ; but he expressed a dread that Miss Mellon, with her superstitious feelings and ideas of propriety, would not be brought to consent to an early marriage, although his extreme illness should be sufficient warning against procrastination.

Mr. Raymond had as little hope, knowing her wilful character and veneration for death ; and Mr. Coutts was in despair at his inability to justify one who had suffered much annoyance for his sake. He

knew Miss Mellon placed more reliance on Mr. Raymond's advice than on that of any other professional acquaintance, and therefore the invalid offered him one thousand pounds if he obtained her consent.

This was an incentive for the man of the world, who evidently was a skilful reader of Miss Mellon's disposition; for he asserted that the only plea to which she would listen was an idea that her attendance might help to preserve the life of her benefactor, and that the private marriage need only be made known to the world in case of Mr. Coutts's illness increasing; for if he recovered, they should be publicly married, after any interval she would name.

The physicians had given their opinion that their patient required incessant and careful watching in his dangerous state; therefore there was no falsehood in the plea used by the ambassador.

When he went on his awkward mission, Miss Mellon—who was in great distress at the illness of her friend—received the account of his increased suffering with deep anxiety. Lengthened reference was made to all his kindness to her and her family; then “the irreparable loss his demise would be to so many persons; the physicians' report that the sole chance of his recovery depended on the incessant attention of someone interested for him; and finally, that the sufferer had fixed his mind on

having that attendance *from her only*, beseeching her thus to save his life !”

Miss Mellon, agonized at the thought of losing one who had supplied the place of an indulgent father to her, saw, however, that even in case of his increased danger, she could not with propriety go to his house. Then Mr. Raymond proposed the alternative of matrimony ; but she refused with a decision which even startled one who well knew her violent impetuosity.

They were several hours together, and, from the angry bursts of voice, a friend who waited for Mr. Raymond thought some unpleasant dispute had arisen which his interference might quell ; but on entering the room he saw poor old Mr. Raymond actually kneeling in entreaty before Miss Mellon, and the latter standing in such a state of excitement, that the unnoticed witness was glad to retire hastily from a scene which seemed past his influence.

Mr. Raymond, skilled in human nature, allowed this violence to exhaust itself ; and, when it changed to hysterical weeping, he taxed her with ingratitude to the only friend she ever possessed, in caring for the world’s opinion of a delay more than for the chance of saving her benefactor’s life, and he worked on her sympathies by every plea in the power of his eloquence to urge. He quoted the example of Miss Farren, whom she had admired

so much; who, for a length of time, was publicly known to have been engaged to the Earl of Derby during even the lifetime of his first countess; after whose decease Miss Farren was married to the widower within six weeks, without having a plea of his dangerous illness urged as the cause of such promptitude; and yet no one had been more respected or better received in society than the second Lady Derby. Why not the second Mrs. Coutts likewise? as the first Mrs. Coutts had been morally "dead" to the world for years! At last, worn out, if not convinced, Miss Mellon agreed that, if her benefactor still continued dangerously ill, by a given time she would obtain, by a private marriage, the privilege of going to his house to nurse him, should an increase of danger require it.\*

While coolly recording this fact, without the excitement of the circumstances, it seems as if no human persuasion ought to have extorted a consent

\* She had always the pardonable whim of a much flattered person; viz., that whatever came from *her* hand must be most acceptable to the invalid, and that her presence would bring comparative ease to those she loved. Thus, it is said, when the Duke of St. Albans took the small-pox, during its preliminary shiverings, the duchess thought nothing could be so efficacious as a cashmere shawl from her neck; and one after another of those hundred-guinea articles was just worn by her for a few minutes and transferred to the chilled sufferer, although she knew her own dread of infection would never allow her to resume their use.

which her better judgment made her so decidedly and vehemently refuse. The dispassionate impulse of every mind will accord with her first resolute refusal; yet (while no palliation is here offered for her compliance) it would be arrogant in any to affirm they could not have been so persuaded, until after they had actually passed through a similar ordeal.

Mr. Raymond having secured her reluctant promise through his powers of persuasion, did not wait for his influence to cool, but produced a written consent to their marriage (previously drawn up and signed by Mr. Coutts), which she signed, and he hastened to the good old gentleman in Stratton Street.

Mr. Coutts was too seriously ill to be expected to recover permanently; but, his mind being easier at the thought of his ability to do Miss Mellon a pecuniary kindness without slander, he became rather better.

At the expiration of a fortnight, Mr. Raymond summoned Miss Mellon to fulfil her promise. She insisted on the ceremony being kept perfectly secret, as, in the event of Mr. Coutts recovering, she would hereafter have a public and more joyful solemnization than the present; therefore she went to St. Pancras church with Mr. Raymond and another person. Mr. Coutts arrived in an equally unostentatious manner, and they were married by the curate, the Rev. Mr. Champeneys.

When the names were signed, they departed in the same way they came, Mr. Coutts having in the vestry-room presented Mr. Raymond with a snuff-box containing the promised thousand pounds; and Miss Mellon returned alone to her own house, without mentioning the change of her name to the nearest friends in her confidence. Every day she drove as usual to his door, and sent up to know how he was; the physicians sometimes coming down with their verbal bulletin. Nothing indicated the marriage, unless, indeed, that Mr. Raymond called her the "Lady of Woodham Walters,"\* avoiding to say Miss Mellon.

In about a month from the time of the marriage she drove one morning to the door in Stratton Street, and one of the physicians came down with great concern, to tell her Mr. Coutts was considerably worse. Alarmed out of all her caution, she clasped her hands and cried, "Good heavens, tell me all! I am his wife!" The astonished

\* She was lady of the manor of some small place bearing the name of Woodham Walters. Besides many very valuable proofs of Miss Mellon's solid regard for Mr. Raymond while living, she at his death (then Mrs. Coutts) took great interest in promoting the almost magnificence of his funeral, which was attended by more than fifty mourning coaches. When it passed from Piccadilly, through Covent Garden (where six theatrical managers supported the pall), she stood to view it, evidently in tears, in a window of her late residence at the corner of Stratton Street.



physician then very forcibly described the danger of Mr. Coutts ; and it was resolved that she must at once assume her place in the house of her husband, the crisis of his illness requiring unremitting care.

Such was, in reality, the “*gay* honeymoon” of the poor dying old man of eighty-six, and the greatly afflicted object of his regard !

On the 2nd of March, 1815, the *Times* newspaper announced the marriage of Thomas Coutts, Esq., to Miss Harriot Mellon, of Holly Lodge, Highgate. This public celebration of their union was attended by a numerous party of high distinction.



## CHAPTER VI.

Precarious state of Mr. Coutts's health—Easy life of Mr. and Mrs. Entwisle—Mrs. Entwisle's talents for brewing—Her declining health, short illness, and death—Demise of Mr. Entwisle—Tablets to their memory—Attacks of the press upon Mrs. Coutts—Their effect upon her—Anecdote.

THE health of Mr. Coutts still continued in a very precarious state. Indeed, for some time after his marriage with Miss Mellon, he frequently expressed his doubts of surviving long; but, when his young wife was an inmate of his house, and he became the sole object of her solicitude and tender care, his spirits visibly revived; and, under the hands of his affectionate and untiring nurse, he exhibited signs of improvement.

Independent of the anxiety which her husband's ill-health caused Mrs. Coutts, barely two months elapsed before another source of affliction arose, from a quarter whence most of her troubles had originated during her lifetime, and which will with-

draw from the scene an individual whose virtues and failings have hitherto played a principal part in these pages.

The improvement in their daughter's fortunes, even before her marriage, brought a great accession of ease to Mr. and Mrs. Entwisle. The former, becoming sedentary in his habits, and epicurean in his tastes—particularly at table—lost his wonted vivacity, and grew corpulent, having altogether a heavy look. His wife, on the contrary, though her appearance gave sufficient indication of a life of ease, still retained her animal spirits; her countenance when unruffled by any of her sudden, and often causeless, paroxysms of anger, had a merry expression, and seemed fraught with good humour. She was ever equally prepared with a jest or a scolding.

For some years before her death she was very partial to the society of lively persons, which she seldom had to wish for in vain; for amongst her other accomplishments was that of brewing very fine ale—"an excellent thing in woman"—but an accomplishment not the most fortunate, perhaps, for herself; the attractive qualities of the beverage having been so great, that a number of persons found it extremely convenient to "drop in" at luncheon time, to taste the sparkling ale, and to hear the no less sparkling theatrical stories with which their hostess gave zest to the draughts. The

poet Gay, in one of his amusing letters to the Countess of Suffolk, mentions a young lady of large fortune, who, when expostulated with for the injury she was doing her *personale* by her fondness for malt liquor, answered with truest sincerity, that by the loss of shape and complexion she could only lose a husband, but that ale was her passion! The latter portion of this declaration truly applied, we fear, to Mrs. Entwisle. Certain it is that her hospitality furnished her with an excuse for joining in frequent sippings of her exquisite "brewings." In truth, "ale was her passion" so completely that she stigmatized every description of wine and spirit as poisons of different degrees of intensity.

But the dark shade of ill-health clouded the ease and enjoyment which, after so many years of disquiet and varying fortune, Mr. and Mrs. Entwisle at last experienced. In spite of the care which the state of Mr. Coutts demanded, Mrs. Coutts lavished on them every attention and expense that affection could suggest.

All her solicitude was, however, unavailing. On the 6th of May, 1815, Mrs. Entwisle ended her eventful life, in the sixty-third year of her age. She was buried on the 14th of the same month, and arrangements were made for her funeral on the most splendid scale by order of her daughter. Singular as it may appear, notwithstanding her repeated tales of suffering and never-ceasing demands for pecuniary

assistance, upwards of seven hundred guineas in specie were found in her repositories after her death.

Relieved of the restraint which his late wife's temper had imposed, Mr. Entwisle formed many low acquaintances at Cheltenham. This was a source of much unhappiness to Mrs. Coutts, and as he was very fond of fishing, she offered to settle him in a very pretty cottage on the banks of the Thames, with an annuity of five hundred pounds. This Entwisle declined, and continued until his death his old habits and associates, pestering her for money, with which, notwithstanding every provocation, she continued to supply him.

Having survived his wife four years, he died on the 6th of June, at Cheltenham, and was interred in the churchyard of St. Mary's old church. In the south aisle of the church there is a handsome white marble tablet bearing the following inscription, placed by order of Mrs. Coutts immediately after his decease :—

Sacred

To the memory of

Mrs. Sarah Entwisle, of Cheltenham,

Who died 6th of May, 1815,

Aged 63 years.

Also

Mr. Thomas Entwisle,

Who died 6th of June, 1819,

In the 55th year of his age.

On the west side of the churchyard there is a plain grave-stone, having only the following inscription to mark the place of interment:—

Sarah Entwisle,  
Æ. 63, 1815.

Also  
Thomas Entwisle,  
Æ. 55, 1819.

At the head of the grave is the latest one, erected by the Duchess in 1832, for her mother only; it is a white marble tablet, on which is inscribed:—

This tablet  
Was erected to the memory of  
Mrs. Sarah Entwisle,  
Wife of Mr. Thomas Entwisle,  
By her affectionate daughter,  
Harriot,  
Duchess of St. Albans.  
Sept. 21st, 1832.

This tablet was originally intended to have been placed against a wall which divided the churchyard from some private property. It is reported in Cheltenham that the individual possessing the latter, finding this position had been selected by the then Duchess for the new tablet, demanded a sum considered by all appraisers as most exorbitant for his permission that it might remain there. The advisers of the Duchess were, however, of opinion that as the tablet was on the consecrated side of the wall he had no right to make a claim, which was probably only

brought forward in consequence of her well-known profusion and carelessness of pecuniary matters in the fulfilment of her projects. All discussion was, however, terminated by placing the tablet on the more appropriate station at the head of the tomb instead of on the wall at some distance. This being done, the whole was enclosed within an iron railing as it now stands.

Besides the death of her mother and the illness of her husband, there were other circumstances of a hardly less painful character which helped to throw a gloom over the otherwise enviable fortunes of Mrs. Coutts.

The instant her marriage was publicly known she became the victim of several unjust, uncalled-for, and cowardly attacks by the press, though certainly by the least reputable portion of it.

A female in middle life, with whom she had been formerly domiciliated, once met her alone when she had quitted her carriage to take, by her physician's order, her daily promenade in one of the parks. The friend of "Auld Lang Syne" respectfully curtsied, and would have passed, but Mrs. Coutts called her back, and, after some friendly inquiries, appointed an interview in Stratton Street, at which she, with an expression of anguish and many tears, declared that her life (in spite of her apparent good fortune and the kindness of her husband) was most

undeservedly made a burthen to her by the unprincipled attacks of calumniators, who only spoke with a view of being paid to hold their tongues.

This kind of persecution must have inflicted infinite pain upon one to whom anything approaching detraction was so abhorrent as it was to Mrs. Coutts. She was not only especially careful not herself to be the utterer of scandal, but always made a point of discouraging it, and, where she had the power, of checking it in others.

We cannot better illustrate this amiable trait in Mrs. Coutts's character than by relating the following circumstance, for which we are indebted to Mr. Dibdin:—Miss Mellon was ever a very warm and sincere advocate for the credit and private worth of the generality of her profession, and nothing could more offend her than any illiberal remarks, tending to bring actors, and more particularly *actresses*, into disrepute. She had been for some years extremely intimate with a highly respectable and numerous family in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and it was universally supposed that there was the dawn of an honourable attachment between her and one of the sons. Unfortunately for *him*, he one evening, in presence of a large party at his father's hospitable board, after complimenting Miss Mellon as "an exemplary exception," gave a most unsparing opinion as to the moral principles (or rather their

absence) displayed by professors of the drama, particularly the ladies. Miss Mellon sprang from her seat, and on her knees took a vow never to have acquaintance or intercourse with the offending party after that evening, and, though she permitted him to escort her home, as had been previously arranged, she never from that period exchanged a word with him.



## CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Coutts's continued illness—Inscription in a volume of Hogarth's works—Family physicians—Anonymous enemies—Jealousy of the physician's wife—His removal—New medical attendant—Scene in the sick room—Mrs. Coutts presented at court—Duke of Kent's marriage—Royal party at Holly Lodge—Suicide of medical attendant.

THAT Mr. Coutts was in continued expectation of his dissolution is evident from the following inscription, in a book given to Mrs. Coutts within the year of his marriage, in which is a reference to his life being preserved beyond what he ever could have expected. It is in the title-page of a complete set of the works of Hogarth, the old gentleman having been a great admirer of that inimitable artist, and several print collectors had been employed to furnish the perfect set at any cost.

“ TO HARRIOT COUTTS,

“ *20th April.*

“ I am very happy to have obtained for you and

given you the prints of the inimitable genius, William Hogarth, as there is no one more capable of understanding and appreciating talent than *you* are, by the native and intuitive genius the Almighty has endowed you with, giving you ‘an eye, an ear, a fancy to be charmed,’ and blessing you from nature (with merely a plain education) with the capacity of comprehending and enjoying, in a clear and supreme degree, every work of genius that comes in your way.

“I have written this, which is no more than plain and simple truth, from the sincere and true heart of your affectionate husband, to whom you have been the greatest blessing, having preserved his life far beyond what he ever could have expected, and made all his days comfortable and happy.

“God bless and preserve you,

“My dearest Harriot,

“THOMAS COUTTS.”

The allusion to Mrs. Coutts having the power to appreciate genius is not exaggerated; her taste in some of the fine arts was surprising in one of such limited education and humble means. But as theatrical persons frequently are intimate with artists, her judgment may have been formed by early associations.

The care of her husband became superior to all

other considerations in the mind of Mrs. Coutts, and, with her usual nervous anxiety when much interested, she was quite unhappy unless a medical attendant was constantly residing in the house, in case of sudden indisposition.

Under this apprehension, a steady, experienced member of the profession (who had been accustomed to prescribe for Mr. Coutts) was engaged as a resident in the house, with a salary of five hundred a-year, to compensate for the practice he might lose. An additional recommendation in the opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Coutts in favour of this gentleman was, his being rather advanced in life, and married; for Mrs. Coutts felt that, in her remarkable position as an actress, married to a man more than twice her age, it was requisite that the slightest foundation for comment should be avoided.

It will scarcely be credited that these precautions were the actual cause of a necessity to break up the arrangement. Some anonymous enemies of the medical attendant poured forth letter after letter to Mrs. Coutts, stating that the physician's lady expressed jealousy to excess respecting her.

Mrs. Coutts, greatly annoyed at a matter which she had taken such pains to avoid, laid the letters before her husband, stating "that, as his wife, she would not allow any such matter to be even hinted respecting her; and, notwithstanding the irre-

proachable and steady conduct of the physician, his wife's weakness must terminate his residence in their house."

Mr. Coutts, who was greatly amused by the absurdity of the matter, said he did not wonder at any woman being jealous of his darling Harriot; and, with this little piece of gallantry, he advised her not to heed the nonsensical letters.

Peace being again restored, they thought no more of the silly affair, until, going for a few days to one of the watering places, they were most injudiciously followed to the same hotel by the physician's wife, who, having likewise had *her* share of the anonymous letters, had resolved upon the hasty step by which her husband lost his appointment.

Mrs. Coutts has been greatly blamed by many for allowing the ill-judged act of the mistaken lady to be the cause of the blameless husband losing his situation. Perhaps, under different circumstances, there might not have been a necessity for taking so severe a course; but it must be recollected that, from Mrs. Coutts's profession, she felt herself liable to an extra degree of *surveillance*, and also that, notwithstanding the perfect confidence in her conduct felt and expressed by Mr. Coutts, still it was too great a risk for her to have the slightest suspicion breathed to her only friend, whose mind might not always have the elasticity to throw off disagreeable, though erroneously-formed, impressions.

A fatality seemed to accompany the persons whose skill was employed to restore the fast-failing health of the banker. The circumstances connected with the next medical assistant selected by Mr. Coutts were attended with the most painful results. The faith which Mrs. Coutts placed in the science of medicine was so great that, with her superstitious feelings, she continued until her demise to have a member of the profession attached to her household, in spite of the disagreeable circumstances to which such a course had so frequently given rise.

In consequence of Mr. Coutts's age it was desirable that the individual selected should have had a previous knowledge of his constitution, therefore the choice was restricted to a small number. The person next chosen was generally supposed to be clever in his profession, but of a peculiarly nervous, excitable temperament, delicate in health, and liable to frequent depressions of spirits, latterly amounting to hypochondriasm. How so injudicious a selection for an old man's attendant could have been made, notwithstanding his talent, surprised many; except that the practice of this gentleman had been much connected with the theatre, and any reference to her former profession was a talisman to secure attention from Mrs. Coutts.

Accordingly, when by the precipitancy of the medical attendant's wife, Mrs. Coutts found herself embarrassed in the choice of another, this gentle-

man expressed a wish to enter such a desirable situation, and he was accepted.

While Mr. Coutts was at Salt Hill he fell and broke three of his ribs, an accident which caused serious alarm at his time of life. His sufferings were extreme; Mrs. Coutts sat up continually with the nurses at night, and his daughters assembled at the inn, under an impression that their father could not survive. About three o'clock one morning the invalid seemed to breathe with such difficulty that Mrs. Coutts and the nurses roused all the party, with the exception of the doctor, who had retired for the night.\* At length it was decided that his presence was absolutely requisite, and one of the group went to request he would rise. While dressing it would appear that he must have worked himself up to that state of excitement which is often observed in highly nervous persons whose rest is interrupted after taking opiates, for, on making his appearance, instead of going to the patient, he levelled a torrent of anger at Mrs. Coutts in presence of the assembled party. He taunted her with a violation of the promise that he should never be called up at night; he referred contemptuously

\* It would be useless to refer to the many trifling inconveniences constantly occurring from the nervous state of this new attendant; it will be sufficient to state *one*, viz., that he made a stipulation that *he was not to be called up at night after he had retired to rest!*

to her origin, her early poverty and profession; he ridiculed the infatuation of Mr. Coutts in his dotage (the poor invalid lying insensible to praise or sarcasm); in short, it is stated that there never was a more extraordinary or unprovoked outburst of rage.

Those who know the value of a night's rest for a nervous person can sympathize with the annoyance felt by this gentleman, if he fancied that the anxiety of Mrs. Coutts had caused him to be disturbed on frivolous occasions; but even this can justify his attack only as far as the supposition that his nerves were agitated beyond the usual control of reason. When he found the nocturnal attendance on Mr. Coutts becoming too severe, he should have felt an equal consciousness of his own delicate health rendering him unfit for the arduous situation.

The hasty violence of Miss Mellon's temper has been so often shown in the course of this work, that her deep anxiety and alarm about Mr. Coutts may be inferred from the fact that she made no reply to the torrent of undeserved violence of the doctor.

The friends who were present hurried Mrs. Coutts from the room, and then, of course, she expressed a rigid determination never to see again the man who had forgotten himself and insulted her.

So unprovoked had been his anger, that among



the family party (though all desirous for peace) no one would undertake a mediation. At length some other physicians waited on Mrs. Coutts, and, without offering any palliation of the offence, begged she would pardon it, on the grounds that they could not otherwise answer for the intellect of the offender, who was most deeply shocked at his own ingratitude, and perfectly miserable.

This appeal, added to an idea of his experience in attending Mr. Coutts, at last induced her to overlook what had passed, and from thenceforth no further allusion was made to the matter.

At length Mr. Coutts became convalescent, and was enabled to renew his attention to the affairs connected with the bank.

At the earliest opportunity after this event Mrs. Coutts was presented at Court by her husband's daughter, the late Countess of Guilford. George IV. received Mrs. Coutts with the most marked kindness, and his amiable sister, who then always assisted as the representative of female majesty, addressed some phrases of courteous encouragement to Mrs. Coutts, who, already agitated by her novel position, was nearly affected to tears by the considerate kindness of the princess.

At nearly the same period the late Duke of Kent was about to be married, and Mr. Coutts, being so much concerned with the affairs of the royal family,



was frequently required in conference. On one of these occasions Mrs. Coutts received an intimation that four of the royal brothers (the Dukes of York, Clarence, Kent, and Sussex) were coming to dine that day at Holly Lodge.

As there were matters of business to be transacted after dinner, it was understood that no one was to be at table but Mr. and Mrs. Coutts; therefore some guests who were on a visit at Holly Lodge went elsewhere to dinner that day, etiquette in the case of a royal party not needing an apology. It was not so well respected, however, by the medical attendant, who, feeling naturally anxious to form one of such a party, seems to have been unaware that Mr. and Mrs. Coutts had no control where such visitors were concerned, who name their own party. He brooded over his absence from table on that day for a length of time afterwards, and gravely represented it as a voluntary slight. This instance proves that his judgment took an erroneous and and unhappy view of matters in which he was but little concerned.

Some time afterwards, the ill health of Mr. Coutts's medical attendant increased greatly, his fainting fits occurring even at table. Change of air was recommended by the physicians, and arrangements were made for his comfort at Ramsgate.

During his absence it was strongly represented

to Mrs. Coutts that, while he continued in this state of nervousness, he was not a safe attendant for her husband, who might require firmness and presence of mind, united with personal strength, in his physician, in case of paralysis or other sudden attack. Mr. and Mrs. Coutts being imbued with this idea, they became alarmed, and accordingly arrangements were made that their late attendant was not to return, unless hereafter his broken health was thoroughly restored.

After this was communicated to him, accompanied by a handsome donation, with the advanced payment of his salary, he remained at Ramsgate, nothing particular being exhibited in his manner beyond the depression to which he had always been liable, and time wore on until Mr. Coutts was ordered to try the air of Ramsgate, a circumstance which happened to be mentioned in the newspapers.

A gentleman who had shown much attention to the retired medical attendant called to see him, and commented on the intelligence that Mr. and Mrs. Coutts were coming down in a day or two. To his astonishment the other replied, "I could not bear to meet them;" and he seemed perfectly overcome. The following morning the shocking fact was known that during the night he had put an end to his existence.

All who had known him of course felt deeply the

dreadful shock; but some of his medical acquaintance, it seems, had considered such an event not to be unlikely, or far distant, in consequence of his desponding nervousness; and they had expressed such opinion long before his decease—judging by that infallible evidence of a diseased mind—his frequently expressed fear (though in the midst of affluence) of dying from poverty in the workhouse.

So painful a circumstance would not have been mentioned here, were it not for the singular way in which this gentleman's melancholy aberration of mind was turned, by malice, into a charge against his former patroness. It was asserted by some of the press that his dismissal had caused this event. When this extraordinary report was seen in print by the family of the deceased, notwithstanding their distressed feelings, they were so shocked by the imputation on one who was so entirely innocent of it, that they considered it necessary to acquit themselves of any participation in it. They consequently sent an excellently written letter to Mrs. Coutts, expressing gratitude in the extreme for her kindness and forbearance, and explaining the unfortunate despondency of the deceased to have been decidedly constitutional.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Holly Lodge—The high wall and the obstinate neighbour—  
Traitor's Hill—The horseshoes—Superstition of Mrs. Coutts  
—Her faith in dreams—Two of hers which were fulfilled—  
The clothing and Bible room—Mrs. Coutts's fondness for  
children.

HOLLY LODGE, a chief object of Mrs. Coutts's care, and the scene of many a magnificent entertainment, was a dwelling which her husband also "delighted to honour." Soon after the marriage, alterations in the house, or enlargement in the grounds, was the order of the day, and it was not long before the elegant building and the sylvan scene which it graced were rendered quite worthy to receive the distinguished visitors who, for many years, honoured it with their presence. One of the alterations, however, involved the owners in a memorable squabble.

One of the occupants of a house on Holly Terrace

(a range of buildings behind Holly Lodge, and overlooking the gardens) had some misunderstanding with Mr. Coutts respecting the purchase of a small patch of waste ground, which the latter wished to add to Holly Lodge, and for which the old gentleman had offered many times more than its value; but the owner, taking advantage of its situation, resolved to extort an exorbitant sum for the little plot, and held out. He had discovered by some forgotten tenure that he possessed a right of way through the grounds of Holly Lodge, and in order to make the purchase absolutely necessary, he proceeded to avail himself of his newly-discovered power to the annoyance of Mr. and Mrs. Coutts, although he had another means of approaching his own property.

Having ascertained that his small square piece of ground, which was situated to the right of the lawn at Holly Lodge, was the most striking view from the drawing-room windows, to which it was quite close, he made a point of bringing carts, and all the accessories of farming, to be deposited there; and when he had any building going on, all the bricks, gravel, lime, sand, and other abominations of mason-craft, were kept on this plot, leaving traces of the odious "right of way" in the shape of broken bricks and scattered lime all along the avenue of the villa. Whenever it was known that

a grand party was about to take place, there would be all kinds of clothes hung out on the spot facing the windows, while his carts were left just in the way of the carriages; and numbers of work-people and labourers were sent to pass backward and forward among the guests who were strolling about the lawn.

Mr. and Mrs. Coutts were greatly annoyed at the pertinacity of their neighbour, who would neither reduce his pecuniary demand to anything within reason, nor discontinue his persecution. The Duke of York and some of the royal family were particularly struck by the slovenly appearance of clothes hung in such beautiful grounds, and of bricks being laid down so near the windows, and they expressed to Mrs. Coutts their astonishment at this seeming inconsistency, while she took otherwise such pride in the villa. She gave them a full history of all her troubles in the affair, at which the good-humoured Duke of York could not help laughing, while he asked her, "Was it not possible to effect some retaliation?"

Mrs. Coutts replied, that the only plan she could imagine would be to build an enormously high wall, shutting out his plot of ground from interfering with her view, which it would thus render useless as a medium of annoyance. The matter, thus suggested in joke, was much approved by her laughing

guests, who persuaded her to consider it seriously ; so an architect was consulted as to the possibility of doing it.

It was agreed by Mr. Coutts and all parties present that such was the best plan ; and, accordingly, within an incredibly short space of time, there arose walls of such gigantic proportion on each side the disputed space, that they could be seen from the public road much above the trees, which, at Holly Lodge, attain considerable height.\*

This wall was to have been hidden with trellis-work and creeping plants, all of which were purchased, when the unaccommodating neighbour at length discovered that it was in vain to contend longer for an exorbitant demand, and that he was the sufferer by his own rapacity ; therefore he acceded to the very liberal terms originally offered by Mr. Coutts, and the plot of ground was joined to the other land attached to the villa.

Nothing could exceed the delight of Mrs. Coutts at her favourite toy being now rendered complete in all she wished. Orders were sent out for the instant demolition of the brick screen, which was pulled down with ropes and other hasty means ; and, by the very next day after the purchase of the ground was settled, the coach passengers on the road vainly

\* The story at Highgate is, that the wall was sixty feet in height ; but this is not given on the authority of a builder.



looked for "the great wall" which had afforded so much amusement.

This feat having been accomplished, another addition to Holly Lodge was made by the purchase of "Traitor's Hill," which Mr. Isherwood, of Highgate, parted with to oblige Mr. Coutts.

A curious appendage to the steps of the house gives us the opportunity of introducing some singular anecdotes of Mrs. Coutts's extreme superstitious belief.

A great weakness in Mrs. Coutts's character, and one which was not without its influence on her actions, was an excessive degree of superstition. This was perhaps the natural consequence of a powerful imagination—unguided by early enlightened education—which had fed itself on Shakspeare and Milton; the horror-school of romances by Mrs. Radcliffe; and the allegorical poets who were in vogue in her earliest days. Her fanciful mind delighted in tracing an omen, a warning, a sort of Ariel agency, in matters of ordinary occurrence; dreams were cited as demanding credence; supernatural agency was but partially doubted; and an evil prognostic ensured the relinquishment of any expedition.

But the most striking evidence of her superstitious prejudice used to cause much wonder among the guests at the rural fêtes there—and this was presented on the steps at Holly Lodge, which, from the



lawn to the hall door, are composed of beautiful blocks of white marble, that a statuary might envy ; but the highest step is disfigured by two rusty, old, broken horseshoes fastened to it, which she and Mr. Coutts (who was likewise superstitious) had found in the road, and they had caused these hideous bits of rusty iron to be nailed on the threshold to avert evil and bring good luck.

It appears one of the unaccountable anomalies of the human character when we observe this woman, of strong natural sense and clear judgment in ordinary matters, allowing herself to be swayed and duped by her own credulity for the superstitious impressions of her youth ; but this memoir is meant to record all the truths which were apparent, and an allusion to this weakness is inevitable, though the results of it were, in most cases, amiable.

There are two anecdotes of her *dreams*, often mentioned by herself, and attested to this day by those to whom they were related. The fantastic interpretation given to these chance visions by two different dream-readers both parties have lived to see verified, together with their own promised advantage therefrom. One was a dream which haunted her with such peculiar vividness for a length of time, that her mind was filled with it by day also ; and when her dresser, and Anderson, the theatrical *coiffeur*, were preparing her for the theatre, she used

to tell them of the recurrence of the dream on each preceding night—viz., “that she was tried for her life, sentenced to be hanged, and was actually executed !” The hair-dresser, who was considered skilful in the internal vagaries of the head as well as its external decoration, used to say, “it was a fine dream, indicating she was to be a grand lady, and to hold her head very high, perhaps to attend the court.”

The prospect of this did not seem very near to a poor actress on three or four pounds per week ; but she promised him that, whenever his prophecy was fulfilled, he alone should dress her hair for court, no matter how far she had to send for his services.

He went away from London while she was still poor, and thought no more of the matter. Miss Mellon rose in her profession, then married and entered the gay world, and at last she was to be presented at court. Before the drawing-room day arrived she thought of the visionary promise which had never escaped her recollection, and seeking out the address of her former hairdresser, she actually sent for him to town to exert his skill on the important occasion. His surprise was excessive at being summoned from Worthing to dress hair which he had not seen for many years. She brought to his recollection her dream, with his own interpretation of it, his prophecy of her going to court, and

her own consequent promise. His wonder was excited also by finding the well-remembered black hair nearly as beautiful as when he had dressed it for her acting *Audrey* to Miss Farren's *Rosalind*, more than twenty years before.

From that time to the last drawing-room, in 1836, attended by the duchess, she always sent to Worthing for Anderson, giving him some thirty pounds for each visit ; nor could any one persuade her to employ in his place some of the *coiffeurs à la mode*, who were recommended for these grand occasions. He is still living, and speaks in the warmest terms of the amiable qualities of his patroness.

The other dream to which she attached so much value, was a long history about "wandering through a castle, in which were chambers full of gems, some rooms being studded with rubies, some with pearls, diamonds, and other jewels, besides heaps of coins. Fearful of being found among such treasure, she retraced her steps, but discovered that two black lions had been chained to the portals during her absence. After much terror, at length she thought that, as she had entered by chance, it was immaterial if she were recognized ; so she rushed out between the lions, who sprung at her without doing injury ; but on looking back at them while running, she reached a river and fell in, the fright of which awoke her." It seems almost too absurd to repeat here

this wonderful produce of some of the Arabian tales in which she delighted; but we premised we were about to record superstitious weakness. This vision was considered sufficiently important to be written out for a famous dream-expounder, a coach-builder, whose family frequently invited Mrs. Entwisle and her daughter to sup at their house when the latter was not performing at Drury Lane.

The coach-builder wrote out his answer, and the duchess, who always retained the paper, said it had shadowed forth accurately her future career—viz., that she had to encounter considerable temptation, suffer from malignity, and ultimately pass through all dangers in purity and safety. The coach-builder, on giving her the written “expounding,” had said, “Never mind your being poor now, Miss Mellon, your good luck will some day bring you the means of keeping a carriage.” To this somewhat professional illustration of her future prosperity Miss Mellon replied, “Then as sure as ever I have a carriage *you* shall be the builder of it.”

Years after this trifling, when the good man had forgotten both dream and promise, Miss Mellon sent him an order to build the *first* carriage she ever possessed; and from that time to the very last one she ordered they all came from the same builder.

When anyone would suggest some new or more celebrated builders, she declined seeing their manu-

facture, saying, "My good old oracle shall build my carriages as long as I can afford to keep one."

Allusion has been already made to her dread of some sad fatality on Twelfth-day, of which she used to cite numerous instances. She was a great observer of fortunate dates, birth-days, wedding-days, and the old festival days of the calendar, with the proper appliances for each, obliging her guests, half in earnest, to taste mince-pies on New Year's Day, tansy-pudding at Easter; to wear hawthorn on May-day, holly at Christmas; in fact, such obsolete customs as would have suited Bracebridge Hall and Irving's charming descriptions.

Many of the trifling customs of prejudice which Miss Mellon observed were followed, no doubt, for the purpose of making her friends laugh: such as the lecture she used to bestow on the fire when the impatient gas would mutter as it escaped from its black prison, which sounds had the honour of being considered the voices of evil genii uttering maledictions on the parties around the fireplace, and the injurious effects can only be conquered by outscolding the fuming coal. Another was, after eating an egg she always made an aperture at both ends of the shell, so that the witches might not find shelter there, otherwise they were permitted to haunt with an incubus the luckless wight who had eaten the contents without taking the salutary precaution.

But there was one point of her susperstitions which no argument could shake, namely, the idea that if thirteen individuals sat down at table one of the doomed number would die within a year. So strongly was this absurd conviction impressed on Mrs. Coutts's mind that she has been often known to send invitations to intimate friends just at dinner-time, that her guests might outnumber the fatal thirteen, to which they might have been reduced by the unexpected absence of someone; and in case of this expedient failing, there would be another table laid. The old story runs, that the last individual of the thirteen who takes a seat has the greatest chance of being the "doomed one;" but Miss Mellon always gave the last comer an equal chance with the rest for life, though she must have fancied she did so at the hazard of her own. When the luckless personage arrived at her table, where twelve were already seated, she used to rise and say, "I will not have any friend of mine sit down as the thirteenth; you must all rise, and we will then sit down again together." So, accordingly, the whole assembly rose from their seats, as if to do honour to the new arrival.

To return to the Lodge, from which an excursion into "dreamland" has so long detained us. The interior of the mansion was decorated and furnished with exquisite taste, of which its mistress possessed

a large share ; so pure, indeed, were her ideas in matters of taste that it often formed the subject of remark how, with her humble origin and imperfect education, she could have acquired it.

But there was one room in Holly Lodge which was an object of Mrs. Coutts's peculiar care. This apartment, situated at the top of the house, contained every kind of wearing apparel for charitable purposes, together with a stock of Bibles and Prayer-books, any of which were distributed among such of the poor as made application.

The hospitality which Holly Lodge gave opportunities for displaying was not neglected. Even before marriage Miss Mellon appeared to think she could not live without visitors, among whom her greatest favourites were children, a preference which she preserved in her latter days ; and even when she was ill and nervous the rosy infant of one of her servants used to be brought into her room, and she would amuse herself for a length of time teaching it to walk and speak. During her professional life, when she lived at Highgate, she used to have the children of her theatrical friends visiting her, in little troops of six or eight in the house at a time, who all called her " Harriot," and, in their plays they made her suffer the most (according to their ideas of justice) " because she was the biggest !" Among these, the children of Mr. and Mrs. Ray-



mond were frequent residents at Holly Lodge ; but her permanent charge was Miss Townshend, the little daughter of Mr. Townshend, the comedian. She was sent to a day-school at Highgate, during her early years, by Miss Mellon, who always had her home in the evening ; afterwards she was removed by her friend to a school in London.

On the occasion of her grand guests arriving, the troop of children were deposited with the Highgate school-mistress—now a very aged woman—residing there, bed-ridden, yet acutely retaining all her faculties ; and she relates how great was the wonder caused among her usual scholars by the exaggerated declaration of the new-comer, that “ Harriot was going to have the Prince Regent and old Queen Charlotte to eat bread and jam, and peaches, and blanched almonds for luncheon on that day ! ”



## CHAPTER IX.

Brighton—Present from the Duke of Clarence of a haunch of venison—An illiberal landlord—Lord Erskine's pike and Mrs. Coutts's pun—A visit from the sisters of Mr. Entwisle—Sir Henry Temple and the spare bed—King of Sicily—Fuseli and Dr. Ruddiman—A moving story.

WHEN Mr. and Mrs. Coutts were at Brighton in 1817, staying at an hotel on the New Steyne, they gave large dinner parties every day, and a paltry advantage which was taken of their liberality made them leave the house and never re-enter it, so that the imposition was as unprofitable as it was illiberal.

The Duke of Clarence had sent an immense haunch of venison to Mrs. Coutts, which strangers went to view in the hotel larder, and she gave a dinner-party, for which it was dressed. As the hotel was full of distinguished guests, and the venison scarcely touched at her table, Mrs. Coutts gave

the landlord permission to serve it the next day to other parties, for which she received the thanks of several strangers and the landlord's most grateful speeches. On the third day, at luncheon, Mr. Coutts, rejecting his usual spare diet, fancied he could eat a little hashed venison, and Mrs. Coutts anxiously ordered it, if possible, to be procured, which they managed, and the poor old gentleman merely tasted it. In settling their heavy daily account that evening, there was some exorbitant charge made for "a dish of hashed venison."

Liberal even to profusion as Mr. Coutts was in some matters, still the man of business would not submit to imposition of this glaring nature; he resolved to leave the hotel instantly, which was accordingly done, and they removed to the corner of the Old Steyne, remaining there two or three months.

Lord Erskine soon afterwards came to Brighton, and told Mrs. Coutts if she would give him a dinner he would provide the fish from his own ponds. She agreed; and his present proved to be an overgrown pike, weighing between thirty and forty pounds, and so hideous in its appearance that no guest touched it, the mere sight of it being perfectly disagreeable to many.

It had been dressed with unusual care, and Mrs. Coutts, not wishing to pay Lord Erskine the bad

compliment of sending away his fish as uneatable, said, "I let you all look at it, but I intend it as a feast for the poor bathing women and their husbands, who are to dine below stairs, and then I shall send them to the play."

Twenty or thirty of these poor people, in their ordinary dress, were hastily summoned, and a repast made for them, graced by the gigantic pike, which they actually devoured.

It being a benefit night, Mr. and Mrs. Coutts and their party went to the theatre, and, in a short time, they observed the entrance of a very merry party into the pit, who kept bowing and curtsying respectfully towards their box.

"Oh, I see who they are, Mrs. Coutts," said Lord Erskine; "they are your ragged staff."

"Indeed they are not," she answered; "they are my *pike-staff*."

In 1818, when part of Mr. Coutts's family—Lady Guilford and her daughters—were staying with him at Holly Lodge, Mrs. Coutts received a letter from the sisters of her mother's second husband, stating that they were coming to London, and wished to see her. With her indulgent husband's permission, she sent them an invitation to exchange their London visit for one to Holly Lodge; and, accordingly, there came two portly, elderly women, the Misses Entwisle, and one of their brothers. They remained

a month or six weeks, and were treated with every consideration by Mr. and Mrs. Coutts, on account of their kindness to Miss Mellon during her childhood. That it required some extent of good feeling to bear with their peculiarities may be inferred from the fact that they all daily *smoked* in their rooms for two hours. However, all the party were well-bred towards them, and the three departed much pleased with the grateful remembrance of former days displayed by "little Harriot," who loaded them with golden souvenirs of their visit.

But more distinguished guests followed this visit, concerning whom the old schoolmistress before named relates an eccentric anecdote. The deposed King of Sicily was at that time in England, and Mr. Coutts had asked him out to dine at Holly Lodge, with several persons to meet him, among whom was Sir Henry Tempest. The royal guest was also to have a bed, and the principal apartment was allotted to him; but the house being filled with visitors, so that Mr. Coutts could not offer to accommodate Sir Henry, he said, "You will be able to make out a bed for yourself somewhere near here;" to which the other assented, and soon after withdrew. Nothing further was said, nor any consideration of how he had disposed of himself, until the attendants, when lighting up the royal dormitory, perceived Sir Henry there, reposing on "the downy bed" in a profound

sleep, from which he could not (or would not) be awakened. The king was already on the stairs, attended by Mr. Coutts. There was no time to dislodge the sleeper, so the branches of lights were hurried into an adjoining room, to which the king was conducted, and some gentleman (its intended occupant) was sent shivering up the town, after midnight, to the house of the schoolmistress patronized by Mrs. Coutts, to implore accommodation.

When Mr. Coutts laughingly reproached Sir Henry with the dilemma in which his love of fun had placed them, he replied, "How could I do otherwise? You expressed, in your dining-room, an order that I should find a bed *near there*; and your state-room being the nearest, I took it to please you."

One of the peculiar fancies of Mr. Coutts was a love for the society of eccentric persons, which he carried to such an excess that, in his estimation, to be odd was almost equivalent to being agreeable.

His partiality for Fuseli, the painter, was a strong instance of this taste. That singular individual possessed, however, great genius in addition to his eccentricity, which affords a means of accounting for the preference; but another of these oddities, a Dr. Ruddiman, seems to have had little claim to that distinction, yet he received a general invitation to the table of Mr. Coutts, of which he was not negligent in availing himself.

In addition to the lawful science of medicine, he dabbled in the unlawful science of astrology, dealing forth nativities and prophecies (which never came to pass) in the most wonderful manner. But his skill in the marvellous was not confined within these limits; it pervaded his conversation to a degree that would have shamed Baron Munchausen; and if a reward or patent had been given for the greatest *invention* of the day, it surely must have been bestowed on some tale related by Dr. Ruddiman.

The patronized guests who daily meet at the board of a patron generally hate each other with a degree of animosity only to be equalled by rival lovers; so at the table of Mr. Coutts, Dr. Ruddiman took a malicious delight in exhibiting Fuseli's uncouth manners; while Fuseli never missed an opportunity of exposing his friend's slight deviations from the paths of veracity.

One day at dinner, Mrs. Coutts was boasting of a small rick of hay, which had been made entirely from the lawn at Holly Lodge; and Dr. Ruddiman, after expressing the proper degree of wondering admiration at such fertility of that expensive little spot, said sadly, that "he hoped it might not encounter the fate of a hay-rick which he had once seen, likewise made from the grass of a lawn."

At this signal of an anecdote, Fuseli groaned like Dr. Johnson; and the rest of the party requesting

to hear the adventure of the hay-stack, Dr. Ruddiman began —

“I was visiting one day, at the luncheon hour, a family who had a most beautiful villa, with long French windows opening on a lawn, and commanding a view of the river. Close by the bank of the stream was a stack of hay, which had been made there some time before ; and I chanced to be looking at it, when, suddenly, I doubted the evidence of my eyes, for I thought it moved ! I looked again and was convinced—the hay-stack was actually receding gradually away from the river side. Unable to speak, I pointed it out to the assembled party at table ; and their consternation equalled my own. We watched the movement of the hay-stack as it slowly and majestically glided along, until it had advanced twice its own breadth ; after which there were several oscillations as if it were settling comfortably in its new situation, and at last it was completely motionless.

“The master of the house, a person of great courage, now came to the determination that there must be thieves within it, concealed, perhaps, until nightfall, when they might enter the house for evil purposes ; so he sallied forth with a long, rusty rapier (said to have belonged to *Longue Épée*, Earl of Salisbury), and stabbing the hay-rick in every direction, gave orders for its immediate demolition.



The gardeners obeyed, though with great caution; and when they took to pieces the lowest layer, what do you think we saw? Hundreds, thousands, millions of *field mice*, who scampered off to the former station of the hay-rick, and were quickly underground past our reach.

“On examining the upper part of this colony the hay proved to be very damp and mildewed, so these sagacious little creatures had discovered their shelter was too near the water, and having unanimously agreed to work all at the same time, had actually moved away the friendly rick to a dry spot!”

“Ugh!” said Fuseli. “Dit onny pody effere hear suche a tomd —”

He was interrupted by Mr. Coutts, from whose eyes tears were falling thick and fast, with excessive laughter, at this moving tale.



## CHAPTER X.

Mr. Coutts's childhood—Anecdotes of charity offered to the rich banker—Mr. and the first Mrs. Coutts's journey *incog.*—Death of Mr. Coutts—His funeral.

As we are now fast approaching an event which materially influenced the after life of the subject of these memoirs, we shall here present the few anecdotes we have been able to collect relating to Mr. Coutts.

The singular manner in which, during childhood, Sundays were passed in his family at a period nearly a century from the present time, he related nearly in the following terms, to some friends at Edinburgh, who have kindly transmitted the account.

His family were staying at that time several miles from the church, the distance being much too great to allow of their return home between the interval of morning and afternoon service. The relinquish-

ment of the latter, even by young children, was not to be thought of in those strict days; therefore, they had to make every provision for an expedition which was to endure "from morn till dewy eve." At daylight on the Sabbath morning there was an extraordinary chatter of nursemaids within the house, and grooms outside; while housekeepers and butlers were making confusion by asking, had nothing been forgotten?

An enormous lumbering old carriage, as big as a moderate-sized parlour, was rolled out and packed with baskets, boxes, and hampers in every possible and impossible position. Infant children were screaming *ad libitum* during the process of donning their holiday clothes; while those who were a little older courageously endeavoured to bear, without sobbing, the soap smarting in their eyes, because the nursemaid said it was "unco bad to cry o' the Sabbath mornin."

Before the house four little foals were disturbed from their morning's gambols, by seeing their fat, black, long-tailed mammas led off to be harnessed to the moving parlour. However, they followed to the yard, and each took station beside its parent, determined to retain that position, like the young pages attached to peers at the coronation.

Then the heads of the family came forth, attended by their numerous progeny, and also by every

retainer of the household, for none would commit the evil of staying away from kirk.

Eight places were found or made inside ; some went on the top of the carriage, some went behind, some on the box, and the least fortunate on the fixed iron coach-steps outside. The word was given, and away they started, the frisking foals accompanying their affectionate mothers, and apparently thinking they had the happiest share of the journey.

During the long drive the children were not allowed to speak, the parents being engaged in reading, so that when they arrived the juveniles had to be reproved for giving way to sleep while going on such a destination. They passed through a cold ante-room, and entered a still colder pew, where the children were placed kneeling in a row before their seniors. Long extempore prayers from the minister soon proved their soporific influence over the kneeling young auditors ; and little Tommy Coutts, who was an irreclaimable sleeper, was certain to fall with his nose against the hard oak before the expiration of the first half-hour.

So dreadful were the quiet pinches given by parental hands after these derelictions from duty and attention, that the children agreed among themselves to kneel so close together that the pressure must ensure the maintenance of their

proper position, even if a sleeper were overtaken in their ranks. This plan answered admirably; tingling ears and sensitive elbows began to forget their former hebdomadal pinchings, and Tommy Coutts "slept with his brothers," in undisturbed enjoyment, propped on each side by a kneeling figure; until one day when luckless Tommy Coutts was the last who entered to take his place, the others were already squeezed in line and he added himself to the end, instead of his customary central position. The minister's prayers were more than usually lengthened; the children not having the least comprehension of what he uttered, all fell asleep together,—the line occasionally swaying backward and forward, which had rather a good effect, as though keeping time to the good man's eloquence. But Tommy Coutts, "the last man on the right," after having accompanied the movements of the other little bodies for some time, gave an unfortunate lurch towards the unguarded side; no friendly shoulder sustained him; and the future banker fell prostrate under the eyes of his disturbed parents! Nor was this all; the pressure from the left became too great in consequence of receiving no counteraction from the fallen right; Tommy Coutts's next neighbour slipped down on Tommy, the third fell on the second, and so on, until the whole row of little sleepers lay like a pack of cards

extended by legerdemain. They were not so easily reinstated, however, as are the latter, by reversing the under card, and the extra severity of the parental pinchings more than compensated for all the arrears due to them.

The service and extemporaneous sermon lasted some hours; after this the family retired to the cold ante-room where their repast was displayed.

Afternoon service then commenced, not quite so long as that of the morning; then another repast in the ante-room, the minister always joining in their refreshing system. Finally they attended evening service, at the conclusion of which the lightened hampers, boxes, and baskets, were bestowed again over the old coach, the eight quadrupeds were disturbed from their enjoyment in the kirk-yard, and the party, perhaps increased by the company of a friend or two, returned home just in time for supper, to be followed by family prayers, some of the little group not feeling sorry that six whole play-days would intervene before they would again have to go through such extensive devotional duties.

The antique maiden aunt at the head of the family was rather a decided lady in her proceedings. Tall, thin, and straight, she bore an ebony staff, headed with silver, tall, thin, and straight, like her shadow; this stood up in the pew, which was under

the reading desk, or precentor's desk, as it is called in Scotland, and if the exhausted clergyman let his voice drop lower than suited her deafness, she would raise the black and silver staff, and tap him on the arm until he raised his voice ; as his words sunk her stick was again raised.

A great point of interest for Tommy Coutts during the service was to watch the declining tones until the stick came into action, and as he knelt before the perpendicular lady, he used to touch with his heel the end of the staff, thereby increasing its tap to a rap.

This little giddy boy, who was thus either asleep or in mischief, became in after life remarkable for his piety and strict attention to devotional duties ; so little is the child the father of the man in serious matters.

A few years since, when the late Mr. Coutts was residing at Clifton with Lady Guilford, he used to walk up Park Street, where the carriage generally took him up at the top. As his dress and appearance had more the costume of a decayed gentleman than a rich banker, he was mistaken one day (whilst walking to and fro for the carriage, which was detained in town) for a person of the former description, by a benevolent clergyman living in Park Street, who, having noticed his anxious looks and somewhat worn apparel, sent a

servant to him with five shillings. The wealthy banker smiled, and returned it with his best thanks, and an assurance that he was not in *immediate want*.

The following circumstance fully illustrates the perfect simplicity and unostentatious appearance of one of the then wealthiest men in England. Mr. Coutts had a temporary residence at Worthing, and was in the habit of perambulating, early in the morning, a sequestered road, where from the frequency of his appearance, and his rather melancholy aspect, attired in very faded, worn-out clothes, he attracted the attention of a humane and kind-hearted gentleman, of limited income, but still one of nature's noblemen. After having seen Mr. Coutts several mornings as usual passing his house, and attentively surveyed his deportment, he arrived at the conclusion that he was a gentleman in circumstances of distress and difficulty; and, after long discussion with his family on the subject, he was completely puzzled in what manner to offer such assistance as he could afford. To address a stranger, and attempt to offer an opinion on superficial appearances, or to interrogate him on the position of his finances, he justly judged would be indecorous, and might be considered by a sensitive mind highly insulting.

The benevolence of this generous man was almost in despair in what manner to act with effect; when



an expedient occurred to him. Mr. Coutts was uniformly accustomed to walk with his hands behind his back, and was always apparently in deep cogitation. "The good Samaritan" was determined, therefore, to watch the first opportunity, after he decided on his plan of proceeding; and, the following morning, having observed Mr. Coutts slowly walking his usual route, when he returned and passed the house, the gentleman issued forth from it, and treading cautiously and silently, he soon overtook Mr. Coutts, in one of whose hands (as usual behind his back) he hurriedly placed a guinea—on which, instinctively, it is presumed, the banker's hand closed! This movement, and the rapid departure of the man of benevolence, were instantaneous.

Mr. Coutts stood in astonishment; he found in his hand a guinea, and he saw, when he turned round, a respectable person making gigantic strides until he arrived at a house which he entered. The entire truth of the occurrence instantly flashed upon his acute mind; he marked the residence, and soon after he entered his hotel he had an inquiry instituted relative to his unexpected benefactor. It was ascertained that he was a retired merchant, who had secured from the wreck of a large fortune just sufficient to sustain himself in the decline of life, with a family of a wife and daughter. The

great banker was now as much puzzled as his noble-minded benefactor had been, in what manner he could and ought to acknowledge, and, if possible, reward, this singular spontaneous beneficence—in what manner to approach such humanity and delicacy. At length he resolved to invite a select few to a dinner party, and to the “retired merchant” he sent an invitation, requesting the honour of his company to dinner on a specific day. The merchant was astounded—it must be a mistake—he did not know Mr. Coutts—and the invitation must have been intended for some other individual probably of the same cognomen. He endeavoured to find if any person of his own name happened to be in the town, in order to forward Mr. Coutts’s invitation, if such proved to be the fact. No one of the same name could be discovered—the superscription was carefully examined—the christian and surname, and the residence, were accurately correct—he must therefore be the “real Simon Pure” intended to be invited. But then, why or wherefore? How was it possible that Mr. Coutts, the great banker, would invite a man unknown to him, with whom he had no acquaintance, and whom most probably he had never seen? Could it be the stupid deception of some would-be witling, in an attempt to be facetious by throwing him into an embarrassing position and rendering him ridiculous?

In this dilemma a confidential friend was consulted, the invitation produced, and it was fully explained that to Mr. Coutts he was a perfect stranger.

The result of the consultation was, that his friend strongly recommended him to attend the invitation. As to the cause of it, inquiry was useless. Mr. Coutts might have heard of the "retired merchant" from some of his numerous friends, and being in the town, and in the habit of giving dinner parties, he might have thought that mode the shortest and most agreeable introduction. Accordingly, on the appointed day the "benevolent merchant" arrived at Mr. Coutts's hotel, for whom he inquired, announced himself to the servant in attendance, and was ushered into the drawing-room.

On his entrance an old gentleman arose and approached him, whom he instantly discovered to be the very individual in whose hand he had deposited a guinea!—He was overwhelmed with confusion. Mr. Coutts in the kindest manner took him by the hand, shook it heartily, and said, "Sir, I am most happy to see you!" Then turning to his surrounding friends, said, "Gentlemen, permit me to introduce to you Mr. —, one of the most kind and generous benefactors I have ever met in the course of my long life; he imagined he had met a case of

distress, and he relieved it with the greatest delicacy." Then turning to the stranger, he continued, "All my friends here, Mr. —, are in full possession of the facts. I assure you, my dear sir, I fully appreciate the goodness, the generosity, and humanity of your intentions. I shall not return your benevolent donation, lest it should offend you; I shall bestow it on some deserving object. Of this, however, let me assure you, that as long as Tom Coutts lives you shall never want a sincere and ardent friend!"

In a short time after this "eventful period," a cadetship was obtained by Mr. Coutts for the nephew of his benefactor, and it is probably unnecessary to add, for the information of those acquainted with Mr. Coutts's disposition, that the donation of one single guinea dictated by such disinterested kindness was afterwards returned a thousand-fold by the magnificent bounty of the great banker.

The following anecdote, sent by an obliging contributor from Stratford-upon-Avon (where he states it is well known), shows the eccentricity and love of odd adventure which formed part of the amiable old banker's character.

When the first Mrs. Coutts was well enough to travel, it is said that she and Mr. Coutts used to set forth on a rural tour, quite incognito, in a plain

travelling carriage, without armorial bearings, and merely attended by a confidential man, who was bound to speak of them only as his master and mistress. Mr. Coutts appeared to have had great enjoyment of any little adventure which happened during one of their excursions.

They had passed a week at a rural inn about two stages from Stratford-upon-Avon, just before the Shakspeare festival commenced. Their landlord, who had no idea that his quiet guests were anything beyond good country folks, advised them to visit the festival; which, however, Mr. Coutts declined, as being too noisy and crowded; besides, at that advanced time he thought there would be no apartments unoccupied. Mine host obviated this difficulty by saying he had a cousin whose house was in a retired street in Stratford, where they could be accommodated; and, all these matters being considered, Mr. and Mrs. Coutts resolved to go there. Accordingly, they set off in the plain chariot, attended by their one confidential footman, and furnished with the introductory letter of the country innkeeper. On reaching Stratford, they drove through the principal streets, and turning down a very narrow one, drew up at a small shop amply stored with miscellaneous goods: snuff, candles, tea, cheese, sand, and Heaven knows what other useful materials. The owner leaned over the

half-door to examine the new customers; but finding they were "cousin John's friends" he ushered them through the shop into the neatest back parlour imaginable. The sole difficulty was, how to dispose of the chariot, as they had only a yard without a gate, and every coach-house in the town was full. At length they thought of lifting the carriage over the paling, and then everything was comfortable. The good people were a little embarrassed between the wish of enjoying their new company and the necessity of attending to their customers, who were rapping impatiently with their money against the counter; but the footman, who was delighted with the fun, begged they would leave the shop to him, and he was quickly seen through the little parlour window selling a half-penny candle and a farthing's-worth of snuff in the most scientific manner possible. The guests had the best bedroom; and in the morning, after breakfast, they sallied forth to attend the festival, where Mr. Coutts met quantities of fine London people, all delighted to see the banker.

Their first demand was, "Oh, Coutts, *where* are you staying, that we may have the pleasure of calling upon you?"

"A short distance out of town," he replied; "and with some friends who receive no visitors."

"Very well; but we don't want to call on

your friends, we only wish to see you and Mrs. Coutts."

"Thank you," said Mr. Coutts; "but really it is so far out of Stratford that it would not be worth your while to come."

And thus daily he had to shake off some of his London friends, who he determined should not call to disturb the good, quiet shopkeepers. Nothing could induce the latter to sit down to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Coutts, and they always waited until their guests had dined and gone upstairs; then they sat down more at their ease than usual, because the "nice young man," as they termed the footman, was stirring about the shop, dealing out starch, blue, matches, and tobacco *ad libitum*.

After a week's sojourn, which Mr. Coutts enjoyed principally for the incognito he preserved, and the fun of baffling the civility of noblemen wanting money, they prepared to depart, and asked for their account. The good shopkeepers looked quite astonished, asking emphatically if they were not "cousin John's *friends*?" adding, "that if there were any payment to be made it must be from themselves to the nice young man who kept shop so well!"

Nothing could induce these hospitable souls to accept any pecuniary remuneration; and Mr. Coutts would have been at his wits' end how to offer



them anything acceptable, but that he heard them once express their liking for good port wine. On arriving in London he purchased a pipe of port; and recollecting the difficulty as to receiving his carriage, he knew they could not accommodate his present in wood, therefore he sent it in so many dozens, "*from the lady and gentleman, their cousin's friends, to whom they had been so kind during the festival;*" and this continued every year while the good Stratford couple existed, who, when chance at length revealed the name of their guests, were more delighted with their condescension even than with the gift of their favourite wine.

Mr. Coutts had long been in a declining state of health; and about the beginning of 1822 it became evident to all his acquaintance that his enfeebled body was fast giving way under the pressure of great age and increasing infirmities. During his illness his wife attended him with the most affectionate assiduity; and there can be no doubt—as we find indeed he himself had already recorded—that her kind and unwearied attentions not only served to prolong his days to the unusually lengthened period to which they extended, but also to cheer the last melancholy scenes of human suffering. Mr. Coutts died on the 2nd day of March, 1822; and the event is thus announced in one of the leading journals of the day :

“Died, on Sunday last, at his house in Stratton Street, Thomas Coutts, Esq. His life was one of great and useful exertion. He possessed a singularly clear judgment, with a warm and affectionate heart. Few men ever enjoyed in the degree Mr. Coutts did the confidence and esteem of his friends, or obtained, unaided by rank or political power, so much consideration and influence in society. The large fortune which he acquired was a consequence, and not the object, of his active life, which, at every period, was devoted to the aid and advancement of those he loved. He died, surrounded with friends, in the presence of Mrs. Coutts, and his daughters, the Countess of Guilford and Lady Burdett, with their families, and Lord Dudley Stuart, the son of his second daughter, the Marchioness of Bute, who is now in Italy on account of her health.”

The following account of the funeral is also taken from the same journal:—

“FUNERAL OF THOMAS COUTTS, ESQ.—Monday morning the remains of this gentleman were removed from his late residence for interment in the family vault of Wroxton Abbey, Oxfordshire. The procession was accompanied by above forty noblemen and gentlemen’s carriages, among which were those of their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of York, Clarence, and Sussex, Lords Coventry, Cawdor, James Stuart, Guilford, Sir Francis Burdett, &c.

An immense concourse of persons attended. The principal mourners were Lord Dudley Stuart and Sir Coutts Trotter.

“What has been stated relative to the disposal of this gentleman’s immense property, though it has been contradicted, is still asserted to be correct. In willing the whole of it to Mrs. Coutts he is said to have expressed his thorough conviction that her signal goodness would not fail to do more for his family than they expected, or he wished ! and she has, it is stated, made most noble provision for his daughters. Upon the Countess of Guilford she has settled £10,000 per annum ; the same amount on the Marchioness of Bute, with annuities to her two children ; and Lady Burdett is also to have a very large sum, the exact amount of which has not been stated, doubtless the same as her sisters. Besides this noble provision now given by Mrs. Coutts for the daughters of Mr. Coutts, the latter gave each of them originally a marriage portion of £100,000. Exclusively of the immediate great property in cash of which Mrs. Coutts becomes possessed, she is to have the preponderating share in the banking-house, which her lamented husband enjoyed, and which is of itself a most capital fortune.”

## CHAPTER XI.

Literary swindlers—Mrs. Coutts's literary habits—An indefatigable reader—Painful case of forgery on the bank—Mrs. Coutts's first visit since widowhood—A speech and a christening.

THE immense fortune left her by Mr. Coutts caused his widow to be regarded as a female Cræsus, and the deep artifices which were laid against her generosity and her purse were sources of great annoyance to her. From many glaring instances we select the following, which appeared in print soon after her husband's death.

Mrs. Coutts was assailed by numbers of the lowest order of *literati*, if they deserve that name; among others, by a person named Mitford, who concocted a mass of shameless falsehoods, and had actually the hardihood to call on Mrs. Coutts and ask £100 for the copyright of the MS.! This was of course indignantly refused, and he found a publisher, but its source was too polluted to prove injurious to any

but the parties who brought it to light, and soon after this Mitford died in abject poverty in St. Giles's Workhouse.

Amid innumerable anecdotes of similar attempts at extortion, the following appeared in a public print of 1826, and are considered authentic.

A well-dressed man called upon Mrs. Coutts with "her Life," which he offered to suppress for a certain sum. As he denied being the author, the lady asked him what part he took in the affair. "That of a principal," was the reply. "Then, sir," said Mrs. Coutts, "you may remember I am a principal, too!" and she instantly threw the manuscript into the fire, and thrust the poker through it till it was consumed. The gentleman left the house precipitately.

Another party tried the same manœuvre, and obtained an interview with Mrs. Coutts, through a petition, wherein he stated "that he was a reduced tradesman, and had an elegant carpet that he was very anxious to dispose of." Mrs. Coutts saw him, intending to relieve his distresses, when he produced the first sheet of a work, and threatened to publish it unless she paid for his silence. Mrs. Coutts immediately ordered him to quit her house. He did so, and took his manuscript to a *gentleman*, who published a portion of it in a magazine, since defunct.

“For the foregoing anecdotes,” say the writers in question, “we can vouch.” We have heard several others of a similar nature, which we have no reason to doubt. A clergyman of the Church of England is named as the extortioner in one case, and a literary gentleman is said to have sent to Mr. Coutts, a little before his death, proofs of about two hundred pages, a part of which subsequently appeared in a work called “Memoirs of Miss Harriot Pumpkin.”

A gentleman who dined (on business) with Mrs. Coutts soon after her widowhood relates as follows : —“Mrs. Coutts led the conversation, and she turned it on the literature of the day, in which I found she was quite as deeply read as those who made this pursuit the occupation of their lives, therefore she must have toiled very hard after the teeming press. In magazines she was absolutely learned, and quoted several long articles in them. She mentioned taking in every magazine that was published, and that they were all placed in a basket together, and carried about in the carriage, &c., wherever she went, so that she might read them at any moment. I have been told that, in the drawing-room at the bank, when she was signing books in which thousands of pounds really seemed considered as shillings, and while the partners have gone down for some other papers, Mrs. Coutts would calmly open her packet

of magazines, and become as much wound up in some little tale as any novel-reading school-girl. Then, on the return of the gentleman, laying aside the magazine, she would understand in a minute what was to be done for business; and when this was settled, she would read away again as though life depended on it. In this drawing-room—an enormous one hung with paper presented to Mr. Coutts by the Hong merchants, and representing Chinese groups engaged in every trade in the celestial empire—there was at that time a plain rush arm-chair, with a well-worn writing-table, and on each a brass plate bearing the name of Mr. Coutts, with the date of his death. On the anniversary of her wedding his grateful widow always visited the bank, and pressed her lips to the spot where he habitually wrote, generally remaining alone for an hour or so in the drawing-room, and on coming forth, it is said, her eyes bore witness that her feelings had been deeply affected.”

The clerks at the bank state that Mrs. Coutts was very fond of going to sit in the bank drawing-room, on its hard horse-hair sofas, and the air smelling like a shut-up city apartment. Here she would unpack her darling magazines, and proceed regularly with them, taking off one corner from the cover of those she had finished. After that process the rest of the party might read them, but woe to



the wight who touched one ere it was thus marked ! Another invariable rule was, that all one month's magazines were to be finished before those of the next month were opened. Nay, she was not unfrequently two months in arrear, when others were longing to peep at the periodicals of the hour. But she always laughingly refused their prayers, referring, as a precedent, to some most un-nationally patient old Welshman, a friend of her mother's. He used to take up a fortnight-old "daily London paper," which, in his remote corner of Wales, would arrive by two, and three, and four at a time, according to the carrier's visits.

Once there was an account in the first paper he opened that a great battle in Spain had been fought, in which the Welsh regiments had signalized themselves, and the next paper was to contain lists of names, &c. Of course every mother, sister, and sweetheart expected to find their own favourites among the heroes, and besought the old Welshman to open the second paper instantly ; but he coolly locked it in a drawer unopened, saying, "To-morrow you shall hear, but mine is a *daily* paper, so there cannot be two for the same day."

Mrs. Coutts had a most surprising memory for this class of literature, and was extremely partial to relating any tale which had struck her fancy. This she did so clearly that many would rather hear

them thus narrated than wade through the chaff that sometimes makes a cleverly-conceived article heavy, and which was always winnowed from her spirited mode of relating anything.

It was strange, too, the power of memory she possessed which enabled her to avoid giving a twice-told tale to the same individual, though she was recounting anecdotes during a greater part of the day.

A very painful instance of forgery on the bank occurred in the Strand soon after the decease of Mr. Coutts.

A young man of gentlemanly appearance and good address presented a cheque for £500, drawn on Messrs. Coutts's bank, which, on inspection by the cashier, was considered to be a forgery. The bank having suffered considerably about that time from similar frauds, the clerks thought it necessary to mention this detected instance to the partners of the firm, who happened to be in the house at the moment. They therefore requested the applicant to walk into the parlour at the extreme end of the bank, where he would find Sir Coutts Trotter and Sir Edmund Antrobus. These two gentlemen having examined the paper, instantly saw it was a forgery; but feeling if they took any legal step in the matter the wretched man's life would probably be the forfeit, they most humanely consulted how to

let him off quietly. Therefore they agreed that they would retire from the room, leaving the young man alone there, so that, observing he was suspected, he might rush forth through the bank and effect his escape.

Accordingly, they withdrew, giving secret orders that he was not to be arrested in his progress if he came forth. All watched in anxious suspense, but the young man still remained in the parlour; and they, knowing that the windows towards the Thames could not be opened by human strength, considered he might have fallen insensible from the horror of detection.

They instantly returned to the room, and found the delinquent sitting near a desk, on which stood a laudanum bottle, whose contents he had evidently just swallowed! Their humane intention thus shockingly frustrated, the gentlemen were obliged to make the case public in sending for medical aid to several places, and of course prosecution then became inevitable.

The effects of the poison being counteracted in time, the forger was tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. Mrs. Coutts was in an agony: she neither ate nor slept, and her distress of mind was increased by the incessant applications from the family (who proved not to be of the most respectable order), saying that "she was going to take the man's life away, as all depended on a word from her."

It was in vain she stated that the offender, by his rashness, had put the matter beyond private interference, and that she had no power to save him from any punishment the law awarded ; representing the misery they inflicted by charging with indifference a person who would think no effort too great to save him.

After great exertion of interest, it is said, Mrs. Coutts made personal application to the highest quarter. She obtained at length the happiness of having his punishment transmuted to transportation for life, which amelioration she caused instantly to be communicated to his family. The thanks she received from his friends were conveyed by the announcement that “it was no use for her to have saved his life unless she settled on him the means to live comfortably out of the country ; and as the whole family intended to emigrate, they expected she would defray the expense of their passage and establishment in New South Wales !”

In 1824 Mrs. Coutts went to the first large party she had attended since the loss of her husband, and this was a grand christening dinner, given by the late Sir Coutts Trotter, in honour of his infant grandson and future heir, the present Sir Coutts Lindsay. Mrs. Coutts was one of the sponsors on this occasion, and there were a great number of guests present, who had not previously met her, anxious to see so remarkable a woman, and to ob-

serve closely how she deported herself after the accession of wealth, which formed a great theme of remark in that particular circle. With her usual quickness she perceived this ; so that altogether she felt, on the first day of throwing off her mourning, out of spirits, silent, and little inclined to be the lion of the hour. At length Sir Coutts Trotter having proposed her health, with a lengthened eulogium, which the guests were obliged to applaud to the skies, they told her it was quite an inevitable consequence that she must return thanks in a corresponding speech. For once her joyous spirits failed and she merely uttered some plain brief expression of thanks ; but her great favourite, Miss Margaret Trotter, being seated next to her, whispered, "Come, come, Mrs. Coutts, that grave reply will not do from you ; pray begin with 'Ladies and gentlemen, unaccustomed as I am to public speaking'—and then you can say what you like." Mrs. Coutts instantly rose and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, not knowing in what terms I ought to return thanks, my young friend here has suggested that I should commence by stating *I am totally unaccustomed to public speaking*: but it is possible I have had the honour of several now present as audience to my 'public speaking' (when I was fortunate enough to have a professional engagement) but a few years ago, and the others are well aware that anyone

might have heard and expressed disapprobation of 'my public speaking' for the small charge of one shilling from the gallery of dear old Drury. Thus having neither rarity nor value to recommend it, I will limit my speech again to returning you my sincere thanks for your kindness !”

The narrator of this says he never witnessed such a sudden effect produced as by the good-humoured and unaffected allusion to her origin, strangers having concluded she would have been anxious to sink all recollections of the poor actress in the rich banker's widow. There was a peal of applause, the strangers crowded round to be presented, and the good-natured Earl of —— being introduced, shook her hand, and said, “That little speech, my dear madam, does you great honour, and fully explains and justifies your present good fortune.”

There is much good policy, certainly, in being beforehand with the world in unaffectedly reverting to an humble origin ; it deprives ridicule of its sting, where the party honestly avows what is no disgrace, unless they seem ashamed of it themselves ; and it induces the world to be indulgent towards those so evidently devoid of pretension, while the lash falls heavily on such as have not the mental courage to refer to their former inferiority.

## CHAPTER XII.

First acquaintance with the Duke of St. Albans—Tour to Scotland—Visit to Abbotsford—Extract from Sir Walter Scott's journal—Mr. Lockhart's account of Mrs. Coutts's visit—Southey and Wordsworth.

THE progress of an attachment, or the manner of a proposal of marriage, can only be described by the individuals concerned. Hence the following history of Mrs. Coutts's second marriage is only given on the authority of the general report in London at the time.

The first time Mrs. Coutts met the present Duke of St. Albans (then Earl of Burford) was at a large dinner party. The guests being assembled, were kept waiting some time, a proceeding which Mrs. Coutts thought so tiresome that she expressed her wonder to her neighbour, who informed her they were waiting for the Duke of St. Albans, and his son, Lord Burford ; that the latter was intended for the great heiress, Miss ——, then present ; and that



the dinner was given on purpose to make them better acquainted.

The late Duke of St. Albans then arrived with Lord Burford, who was at that time a retired, gentlemanly young man of three-and-twenty, recently returned from his travels.

After the protracted dinner, when all had regained their good humour, which had been sadly at a discount during the tiresome delay, Mrs. Coutts amused herself with the anticipation of how the young, and apparently shy, Lord Burford would prosper in wooing the heiress when he came upstairs. But, to her amazement, on the entrance of the gentlemen, Lord Burford placed himself beside herself, where he remained for the rest of the evening; and she soon discovered a bond of sympathy in their mutually great admiration of Shakespeare, a point on which she was so much an idolator that she scarcely accorded any merit to modern poetry.

The Duke of St. Albans joined the *tête-à-tête*, and after a merry evening they parted the best friends possible, the duke asking permission to call at Holly Lodge. This was granted willingly; and the duke was so much pleased on a further acquaintance with Mrs. Coutts, that he brought his daughters to introduce to her, and the whole party became very intimate. The Ladies Beauclerk had lost their

mother while very young, which accounts for their having sometimes gone out with Mrs. Coutts, and travelled with her.

After some time, it would seem that the other matrimonial project for Lord Burford was abandoned, and the late duke is said to have afforded every encouragement to his son's success with Mrs. Coutts, of whom also his young and lovely daughters, the Ladies Charlotte and Maria Beauclerk, were frequent guests.

The late Duke of St. Albans died in July, 1825. Some months afterwards Mrs. Coutts set forth on a progress through her favourite Scotland, taking with her Lady Charlotte Beauclerk and her brother, now become Duke of St. Albans.

They visited all the principal towns, and stayed some days with each of Mrs. Coutts's friends,—the Earl and Countess Breadalbane, at Teignmouth Castle; the Earl and Countess Lauderdale, at Dunbar Castle; Chief Commissioner Baron Adam (the great friend of George the Fourth), at Blair Adam; Sir James and Lady Stuart, at Caithness; Sir J. and Lady Marjoribanks; Sir John and Lady Stuart, of Allanbank (first cousins of Mr. Coutts); Mr. and Lady Eleanor Balfour, and many others. But the visit of most interest was that to Abbotsford. It is thus recorded in the journal of its gifted host, "The Wizard of the North," under date November 25th, 1825:—

“Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe, her confidant in sincerity; she had refused him twice, and decidedly; he was merely on the footing of friendship; I urged it was akin to love; she allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least inclination that way.

“Is this frank admission more favourable for the Duke than an absolute protestation against the possibility of such a marriage? I think not.

“It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good if the means be shown to her; she can be very entertaining, too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without the appearance of ostentation.

“If the Duke marries her he ensures an immense fortune; if she marries him she has the first rank. If he marries a woman older than himself by twenty years, she marries a man younger in wit by twenty degrees. I do not think he will dilapidate her fortune; he seems good and gentle. I do not think she will abuse his softness of *disposition*—shall I say, or of—*head*? The disparity of ages concerns no one but themselves, so they have my consent to

marry if they can get each other's. Just as this is written enter my Lord of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte, to beg I would recommend a book of sermons to Mrs. Coutts. Much obliged for her good opinion; recommended Logan's. One poet should always speak for another. The mission, I suppose, was a little display on the part of good Mrs. Coutts of authority over her high aristocratic suitor. I did not suspect her of turning *dévôte*; and retract my consent as given above, unless she remains 'burly, brisk, and jolly.' "

The subjoined account of Mrs. Coutts's visit is extracted from the Life of Sir Walter Scott, by Mr. Lockhart:—

"The much-talked-of lady, who began life as Miss Harriot Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troupe, and died Duchess of St. Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs. Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could in these days have thought a Scotch progress complete unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connexion with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank,\* I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occa-

\* Miss Stuart of Allanbank was Mr. Coutts's mother.

sionally in London during Mr. Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue (leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled to Edinburgh), the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying to poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts, her future lord, the Duke of St. Albans, one of his grace's sisters, a *dame de compagnie*, vulgarly called a 'toady,' a brace of physicians, for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous; and, besides other menials of every grade, two bed-chamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person, she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because in her widowed condition she was fearful of ghosts, and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming all this train found accommodation, but it so happened there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs. Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw something, of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping;

they were on the outlook for absurdity and merri-  
ment. And I need not observe how effectually  
women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without  
doing or saying anything that will expose them to  
the charge of actual incivility.

“Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his  
power to counteract this influence of *the Evil Eye*,  
and something to overawe it; but the spirit of mis-  
chief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see  
that Mrs Coutts followed these noble dames to the  
drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood  
which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by  
every blandishment of obsequious flattery in this  
mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen’s  
sederunt short, and soon after, joining the ladies,  
managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and  
cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely  
young marchioness), into the armorial hall adjoining.

“‘I said to her,’ he told me, ‘I want to speak a  
word with you about Mrs. Coutts: we have known  
each other a good while, and I know you won’t take  
anything I say in ill part. It is, I hear, not un-  
common among the fine ladies in London to be very  
well pleased to accept invitations, and even some-  
times to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts’s grand  
balls and fêtes; and then, if they meet her in any  
private circle, to practise on her the delicate

manœuvre called *tipping the cold shoulder*. This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new, either to you or to me, that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once step so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying that the style in which you have received my guest, Mrs. Coutts, this evening, is to a certain extent a sin of the same order. You were all told, a couple of days ago, that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day, to stay three nights. Now, if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me on with her.'

"The beautiful peeress answered—

" 'I thank you, Sir Walter. You have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter; and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good will.'

"One by one the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been



put in a right train. The marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, ‘because he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts.’ ‘Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts.’ Mrs. Coutts’s brow smoothed; and in the course of half an hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam’s *Laird of Cockpen*. She stayed out her three days; saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow; and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.

“It may be said (for the most benevolent of men has some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts’s comfort because he worshipped wealth. But the truth is, he had a kindness towards Mrs. Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences, he remembered as Pope did, when ridiculing the ‘lavish cost and little skill’ of his *Timon*,

‘Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed.’”

Another notice of Mrs. Coutts occurs in the journal of Sir Walter Scott. It is as follows:—

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“January 24th, 1826. My kind friend, Mrs. Coutts, has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was particularly interested.”

Sir Walter Scott was not the only genius who honoured Mrs. Coutts with marked attention. Southey and Wordsworth paid their respects to her at the hotel, Ambleside, Westmoreland, during her travels; Rogers was an old friend, and many others among our best authors.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The duke's proposal of marriage—Term of probation—Curious incident—Change of mind—Acceptance—Marriage settlements—Wedding present.

IN the spring of 1826, the Duke of St. Albans, it is said, made a proposal of marriage to Mrs. Coutts, which, she owned, very naturally, gratified and flattered her exceedingly; but she was fearful that a young man of five-and-twenty, but recently come to his title and fortune, might scarcely know his own mind, and if he married so precipitately, would have a strong chance of regretting it. Accordingly, she subdued her own gratified ambition, and stated the cause of her hesitation; adding, that if, after another twelvemonth's experience of the world, he still remained in the same frame of mind, she would then believe the offer was made on due reflection and could no longer have any plea for hesitating to accept the honour of his hand.

During the year of probation the duke was much in her society, and she found him so amiable, moral, and well-principled, that, as she used to say, "I became exceedingly attached to my handsome young duke, and quite vexed when people talked of his marrying any other person!" When the revolving year brought round the "flowery May," the duke, not having found cause to revoke his former offer, renewed it.

Mrs. Coutts's delight was, however, mixed with misgiving, for some female friend had ridiculed her excessively on the affair, prognosticating all kinds of sorrow as the necessary consequence of her marrying one so young; and she therefore requested time to drive out to Holly Lodge, to reflect on her answer ere the final decision was made. The story goes that the recollection of the noble lady's raillery prevailed over ambition and affection; so with mortified feeling and vexation she wrote a refusal, which she sent to London by a servant on horseback.

When he was gone, however, the brilliant offer rose before her imagination, with the excellent disposition of the duke, and her own regard for him, until, by one of those hasty impulses which governed her nature, she became half distracted at the conclusion to which she had brought the matter. The world would say that "she had tried for a duke

and failed !” for who would credit the folly she had just committed ? Suddenly the idea occurred to her that it was not too late to overtake her messenger, and she ordered another groom to ride fast after the first and bring him back ; in which he succeeded.

On regaining the ungrateful answer, she wrote another from the natural dictates of her first intention. This acceptance of his offer brought the duke to Holly Lodge ; and so many persons on both sides had interfered to prevent the marriage, that it was settled there should be no more delay, and directions were forthwith given to Messrs. Parkinson and Co., the lawyers of Mrs. Coutts, to set about preparing the settlements.

The orders given by the duke to Mr. Parkinson respecting the settlement, are said to have been so liberal as to indicate a nature of the noblest description. He would not hear of any settlement being made on himself, either during the lifetime of Mrs. Coutts or after her death ; and further, he laid the papers respecting his own property before Messrs. Parkinson, and requested they would make from it any settlement on Mrs. Coutts which was considered requisite.

Those who accuse the duke of having married solely from mercenary motives, must admit that he took but little pains to secure their accomplishment, in thus leaving his future prospects completely at the

disposal of one so totally governed by impulse ; and the result has been that a comparatively moderate portion of her immense income is appropriated to him, and even this as a life annuity only ; her strict notions of justice in restoring the bulk of Mr. Coutts's property to his descendants having checked her generosity towards a noble family who possessed a large share of her regard.

St. Alban's day, the 17th of June, happening that year to occur on Sunday, the wedding took place, by special license, on the 16th. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Lord Frederick Beauclerk, the duke's uncle, in Stratton Street, in presence of a distinguished party.

It is said that, immediately after the ceremony, the duchess told the duke that Mr. Parkinson had her wedding present to offer him, which proved to be £30,000.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Attacks of the press—A country editor's charge of hypocrisy for the purchase of Bibles—The duchess holds a plate at the Liverpool festival—Romantic and affecting incident—Her reflections on it.

WHEN an individual has attained such an elevation as to make her of sufficient consequence for satire, she may be sure of experiencing it in a country more famous than any in Europe (France excepted) for ingenious misrepresentation. An obscure country paper abused the duchess for purchasing a Bible and Prayer-book in their town, "which," said its editor, "could proceed from nothing but hypocrisy!" How buying the sacred volume proves the purchaser a hypocrite it may require the powers of this provincial logician to prove. But how much more evident must this self-made truth have appeared to the gentleman in question if he had known that the duchess procured Bibles and Prayer-books in almost every town she visited, to distribute during her journey, or to increase the stock she always kept for the poor at Holly Lodge.



It was customary with the duchess on entering provincial towns, to take a walk through the principal streets, and make small purchases, which she of course did for the encouragement of the trader rather than from any immediate want of the thing bought. It really does not seem that anything would suggest itself so readily to the mind of one who wished to patronise a bookseller, but had no definite article in view, as a Bible or Prayer-book.

As a proof of the readiness with which the ill-natured assumption or assertion of one individual will be responded to by another, though each is equally ignorant and reckless of the ground for any assertion at all, the story of the Bible was retailed by an innkeeper, whose hotel has frequently had the profit and the honour of receiving her grace as an inmate. Not contented with telling the story, and taking up the editor's ill-natured conclusion, he added, that so little use did the duchess make of her purchase, that at the house of a friend of his, where she had stayed some days, she had actually left it with the *leaves uncut*. As Bibles are invariably sold ready bound, it was impossible that this could have been the fact ! \*

\* Her own favourite Bible, which had belonged to Mr. Coutts, together with the pillow on which he had breathed his last, were always used by her wherever she went ; they were packed in a plain case, and placed beside her in the travelling carriage ; indeed, woe to the hapless footman who should have forgotten these greatly-valued relics !

In 1828 the duke and duchess attended the musical festival at Liverpool, where the latter held a plate for contributions to the charity. For this town she had always the most grateful feeling, in remembrance of the patronage shown there to her dramatic efforts. A characteristic speech of hers is universally known there, referring to former days. On her return from attending the festival, tired and oppressed with the heat, the crowd assembled to see her entering the hotel was so great that it was impossible to effect a passage. Some of the constables who had been attending the breaking up of the festival came forward to disperse the crowd from the carriage, using rather rough measures with individuals of the gaping throng. But the duchess, thanking them for the interference, said, "Pray do not use force to prevent the approach of any Liverpool person, for most probably some of their family were kind enough to *pay* for seeing me at the theatre in my younger days."

The following is an instance of how much she ever cherished the memories of her early theatrical career, as well as her bounty to those who, by such associations, became endeared to her.

When Harriot Mellon was a child of seven or eight years of age, she was staying in Lancashire with her mother and step-father, the latter having an engagement to perform in the orchestra, Mrs. Entwisle

and her child filling up processions, &c. The line of heroines was filled by rather an antique belle; the tragic hero was too stiff to fall; and there was not a dancer among the whole company; so they performed very steady comedies, or very quiet tragedies, with dances and deaths omitted by particular desire. But, fortunately for the exchequer, a remarkably pretty young actress, trying her strength during a provincial tour, arrived, and was engaged to perform for a few nights. She could sing, dance, faint, scream, fall, or stab herself, to perfection: better still, in mad scenes she could let loose a profusion of long golden hair which nearly reached the ground, and carried away all hearts within its sunny meshes. Then she had the pink and white complexion of early girlhood; bright blue eyes, and a fine commanding figure. Mrs. Entwisle, who was a full brunette, said, "For her own part, she did not admire wax dolls;" but as for little Harriot, the beauty and grace of the young actress quite turned her head. She attended every rehearsal; and at length came the grand evening, when she was allowed a place in the pit. She was awed by the stranger in tragedy and black velvet, and enchanted by her gaiety in comedy and white muslin; but when Mr. Entwisle's violin commenced playing "*Laura and Lenza*," and she entered "*en costume de ballet*," to execute some

fancy dance, the delighted child unconsciously stood up on the bench to watch the steps and movements, until recalled by an angry slap from her mother, with the remark, that she “need not make a fool of herself, although she was no judge of what acting should be.”

The success of this young person, the plaudits and wreaths bestowed on her, gave Harriot Mellon the first serious notion of what could be done in the profession ; she was the constant limit of her idea of perfection ; and, greatly to her mother’s annoyance, Harriot used often to exclaim when rehearsing, that “she only hoped some day to play *half* as well—as the lady in white satin.”

Nearly half a century had elapsed since that fair young creature had left England. She had gone to America—married there—and no more was heard of her. The “little Harriot Mellon” was now Duchess of St. Albans, and stepping from her carriage at the door of “the Dolphin,” Southampton, where the crowd was so dense that none could effect a passage to the house without the poor people being pushed away, which the duchess never would allow.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy (who are remarkably attentive hotel-keepers) endeavoured to disperse the people and then was heard a feeble old voice entreating not to be sent away, as the charity of the opulent

was the only chance for one who was now a stranger in her native land.

The duchess fortunately heard the poor old woman's appeal, which was uttered in a very different style from that of a common mendicant. She motioned for the suppliant to come forward,, and was struck with the utmost compassion for the wan, suffering countenance of the poor creature, as she scarcely ventured to hold forward her thin arm with the petition. The duchess took it, and inquired whether the writer had any particular knowledge or claim on her? The aged female replied in the negative; but said the petition contained a brief statement of the vicissitudes of a weary life, which she trusted would soon draw to its close.

Her auditor, always swayed by momentary impulse, was struck by the selection of language, so superior to her wretched and scanty garb, and she gave orders that the woman should have a meal in the hotel while she awaited the result of the petition.

It proved to be the simple tale of a young actress who had left England in her girlhood, made an unfortunate marriage, failed in her profession, and had gone through every gradation of misery and want for a long series of years; until, in poverty, sickness, and old age, she had come home to die; her utmost prayer being to obtain a little money to purchase a basket of fruit to retail, so as to afford a

scanty subsistence until death relieved all her wants.

She did not mention her original name, merely signing the petition with her married one; but the duchess (who had the most extraordinary recollection of every trifle connected with those she had formerly known) no sooner heard the name of "*Mrs. Felton*," than she remembered that the youthful actress in Lancashire, the bright vision of her own childish days, had married an actor of that name in America, although, having heard nothing further respecting her, it had been generally concluded she had died there.

On inquiry, this decrepit poor creature proved to be the same individual. The duchess supplied her amply in the way she had suggested, besides giving her clothes, and also deposited a sufficient sum in the hands of a trustworthy person, to be given in weekly distributions, lodging money, &c.

This genuine romance of real life, which is testified by many at Southampton, made a great impression on the duchess, who used to refer to it daily, for some time afterwards, to persons of all classes there with whom she talked; and when relating the first part of the story, she added, "I had not nearly the talent, nor anything like the personal advantages of that young woman. How can I ever feel sufficiently grateful for the difference of our fates?"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE DUCHESS AT BRIGHTON.

Brighton—The duchess's recollections of former days—Her opinion of high life—Her after-dinner speech—Her compliment to Sir Walter Scott—A present from his Majesty King William the Fourth to the duchess—Late hours—St. Albans House besieged—Treachery—The besieged surrender at discretion—"Fairy favours"—The duchess disguised as a beggar—A *well-authenticated* ghost story—Mr. Coutts's letters—Jim Crow—Miss Sheridan—Hawking parties on the Downs—Illiberal treatment of the duchess in consequence of her sudden elevation.

THE Duchess of St. Albans was much attached to Brighton, and was, for a series of years, in the habit of visiting it. At these periods St. Albans House became the headquarters of social gaiety, and seemed the centre around which all the fashion, wit, and pleasure of the place revolved.

The following reminiscences are from the pen of a gentleman whose high literary reputation, refined



wit, and companionable manners, must have rendered his society eagerly sought after by the duchess and her guests. We are not allowed to mention his name, though our readers would doubtless be glad to hear it, as it would remind them of many a humorous *jeu d'esprit*, and of many an entertaining page.

“My permanent residence at Brighton, at which place the duchess, during the latter years of her life, generally passed the winter, and the fact of my having been acquainted with many of the associates and circumstances of her theatrical career—a period to which she always delighted to refer—occasioned her grace to honour myself and my family with the most constant, marked, and flattering attentions. Capricious and eccentric in her movements, she would sometimes pay a short and unexpected visit to Brighton, when she would request me to inform her what families were in the place, and to assist her in the arrangement of her invitations; while at her grand entertainments during the season I was often put in requisition to write a song, or dialogue, or some *jeu d'esprit* of an appropriate nature,—a task very easy of accomplishment, since little was expected; and these banquets were usually given on particular anniversaries, or in celebration of some recent occurrence, which supplied topics and allusions. From the crowd and heat of these

festivities, both of which were very apt to be oppressive, her grace would sometimes seek a short respite by taking me aside, and chatting about olden times, green-room jokes, popular actors, plays, and playwrights, her beaming features and melodious laugh attesting the delight she took in these reminiscences.

“Twice, in instances of this nature, and nearly in the same words, has her grace exclaimed: ‘Ah, those were pleasant days! those were pleasant days! Few persons have seen so much of the various aspects—I may say of the two extremes of life—as myself; and few persons, therefore, can be better judges of the difference between great poverty and great wealth; but after all, this does not, by any means, constitute the chief and most important distinction between the high and the low states. No, the signal, the striking contrast is not in the external circumstances, but in the totally opposite *minds* of the two classes as to their respective enjoyment of existence. The society in which I formerly moved was all cheerfulness—all high spirits—all fun, frolic, and vivacity; they cared for nothing, thought of nothing, beyond the pleasures of the present hour, and to those they gave themselves up with the keenest relish. Look at the circles in which I now move; can anything be more “*weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,*” than their whole course of life? Why, one might as well be in the treadmill, as toiling in

the stupid, monotonous round of what they call pleasure, but which is, in fact, very cheerless and heavy work. Pleasure indeed! when all merriment, all hilarity, all indulgence of our natural emotions, if they be of a joyous nature, is declared to be vulgar. I hate that horrid word—it is a perfect scarecrow to the fashionable world; but it never frightens me, for I had rather be deemed “unfashionable” occasionally, than moping and melancholy at all times. There can be no cordiality where there is so much exclusiveness and primness,—no, all is coldness, reserve, and universal ennui, even where this starchiness of manner is unaccompanied by any very strict rigour in matters of conduct. I look out for cheerful people when I can find them—I do everything in my power to make them happy—and yet, were it not for the merry and frequent laugh of dear old General Phipps, could you not swear that my dinner parties were funeral feasts? Look, now, at those quadrille-dancers in the other room; they have been supping—they have been drinking as much champagne as they liked—the band is capital—the men are young, and the girls are pretty;—and yet did you ever see such crawling movements—such solemn looks—as if they were all dragging themselves through the most irksome task in the world! Oh, what a different thing was a country dance in my younger days!’

“I suggested that this feeling was neither confined to herself, nor by any means consequent upon position in society, but rather a general law of nature, rendering us all less susceptible of pleasurable impressions as we advanced in life, so that the change was rather in ourselves than in our associates, or in our outward circumstance:—an opinion which I ventured to illustrate by the well-known anecdote of the old lady who complained that they did not make the looking-glasses half so well as when she was young.

“‘But, at all events,’ said the duchess, ‘the old lady had once been young; so have I, and I have enjoyed the light-heartedness and the gaiety of youth. But in high life there is no such thing as youth; people are old when they first come out; the men are all grave and reverend signors, and the girls are all prim duennas, even in their teens. They are too fine and too fastidious to enjoy anything. This world, it would appear, is not good enough for them, though I quite agree with the methodist parson, that “they may go farther and fare worse.”’

“Few persons enjoyed a facetious anecdote, a jest, or a *bon mot*, with more *gusto* than the duchess; it was, perhaps, the only pleasure of her youth that she retained unimpaired; she formed a capital audience, as it is technically termed; her laugh was prompt and hearty, and she loved to run about

communicating to others the good thing which had just given delight to herself, and which she seldom repeated without improving it in the mode of narration. Without laying claim to be a wit herself, she knew well how to elicit it from others, while she displayed at times a quiet drollery that amounted to humour.

“In Mr. Lockhart’s admirable Life of Sir Walter Scott, he has recorded, in a very graphic and entertaining manner, the particulars of the duchess’s visit to Abbotsford, on which occasion, as her grace herself informed me, she paid a very happy compliment to her distinguished host. In showing her over the house, after desiring her to observe that his bedroom communicated by a private staircase with a little study, he added, ‘Thus, you see, when they all think I have retired to bed, I can escape to my study, write for two or three hours, *and nobody the wiser.*’

“‘That is impossible, Sir Walter,’ replied her grace. A more delicate or a better turned compliment it would not be easy to imagine.

“At one of her grand balls a party of noblemen who had been dining at the palace arrived at a late hour, when Lord A—— delivered to her grace a box of richly decorated French *bonbons*, as a present from his majesty (King William), accompanied by a very kind, flattering message; a mark of attention which was received with evident delight.

“ ‘That is so like the good king,’ exclaimed our hostess, making a proud display of her saccharine treasure: ‘always thinking of others, and showing the amiability of his disposition in the most trifling matters. Have you heard of his condescension to General Phipps? He delights in the general’s society; so must everybody. The general has a dinner party at the Norfolk every Thursday, and has several times been obliged to leave his friends to entertain themselves because he has been suddenly commanded to the palace.’

“ ‘General!’ said his majesty, when he was apprized of this *contretemps*, ‘I must not see you one day less often in the week, but you shall not be taken away any more on a Thursday.’

“ ‘People are constantly saying,’ pursued the duchess, ‘that King William is deficient in the courtesy, and elegance, and grace of George the Fourth; but the true gentleman is known by the benevolence of his heart rather than by his dress or address; and, measured by this standard, I will maintain his present majesty to be the finest gentleman that ever lived.’

“ Late hours had never agreed with the duchess, and when her health began to give way she was more particularly solicitous to avoid them—a circumstance which she frequently mentioned to her friends, and invariably specified and underlined the

hour of meeting upon the invitation cards to her balls. Notwithstanding her known wishes upon this subject, many of her visitants, particularly the gentlemen, would go to two or three previous parties on the same night, crowding to St. Albans House just in time for the magnificent banquet which was generally served at a stated hour. This ungallant conduct might have provoked a saint, and the duchess, annoyed one night at the emptiness of her rooms two or three hours after the prescribed time of assemblage, gave orders that the street door should be shut, and no more visitants admitted. Her commands met a prompt obedience, and no sooner had they been carried into effect than a party of cavalry officers arriving from the barracks put the knocker in active and repeated requisition, which not producing the desired effect, some applied the hilts of their sabres to the door, while others, inserting the points of their weapons beneath it, rattled them on the floor of the hall. Meanwhile fresh parties were constantly driving up, the knocker was kept in incessant action, the road became crowded with carriages unable to deposit their freights, and the cause of this unexpected stoppage having been whispered from the windows by the earlier and more fortunate guests, a singular scene presented itself to the smiling spectators. Some of the excluded were laughing heartily at



their own ridiculous position,—others, admitting that they were served quite right, defended the fiat that had been issued; while a third set, condemning it in no very measured terms, declared they would immediately return to their own homes. In the midst of this hubbub and confusion, the doors were again thrown open, and the whole assemblage pressed into the house, eager to make their peace with their generous but determined hostess. This was soon done, for her anger passed away as easily as it was excited, and her face wore its usual pleasant smile when she exclaimed to the writer, ‘Now I will appeal to you whether I was not justified in what I did: it was twelve o’clock when the doors were closed; I invited friends for Wednesday night who arrive on Thursday morning, and who are thus guilty of a double rudeness, not coming when they *are* asked, and intruding themselves into my house when they are not asked. I would have kept the doors locked, and have stood a siege till to-morrow; but when I found that some of my assailants, bribing my servants to let them down the area-steps, had passed through the offices, up the kitchen-stairs; when I discovered, in short, that there was treachery in the castle, I had nothing left for it but to surrender at discretion.’

“So great was the anxiety of the duchess to afford a constant round of amusement to her friends,

that she has often given orders for parties when her health was by no means strong enough to encounter the fatigue of reception and the invariable heat of the apartments, for her Brighton house was not in any way adapted to the extended scale of her entertainments. Sometimes she was obliged to retire at a very early hour, or not to appear at all, being confined by indisposition to her couch in her own room, while the whole mansion, echoing to the sound of bands of music, and the merriment of the dancing crowd, was at the same time pervaded by the fumes of the preparing banquet—accompaniments to which no other invalid would have willingly exposed herself for the sake of gratifying her acquaintance.

“When her grace was able to do the honours of her house, no one could discharge that duty more kindly and courteously. If there were strangers present, her quick eye soon discovered them, and she hastened to put them at their ease by introductions and other little marks of attention, in which she was well seconded by the duke, who generally chose for his partner in the dance the young lady who had the least pretension to that honour, or who seemed to have been overlooked by the other cavaliers.

“Nobody made a present with more delicacy and grace than the duchess—a tact which, even if it had not been natural, she could hardly fail to have acquired by long and constant practice. ‘My dear,’

she said to a fair damsel whose sarcenet scarf had been slightly marked by the wheel of the carriage, ‘you cannot possibly wear it to-night, for we are going to be very gay. I wish you would change with me. I may wear what I like in my own house, you know, and I never fancied what I have now on; it is too young for me. Come now, be a good girl, and do it to oblige me.’ So saying, she withdrew the sarcenet, and threw over the shoulders of its late wearer a valuable scarf of white blonde lace.

“In the distribution of her gifts she often enhanced the pleasure by the unexpected time and mode in which she conferred them, ever delighting in little surprises and fanciful inventions. While amusing a party of young ladies, she gravely declared her belief in the continued existence of fairies and their favours—a position which was of course received with a laugh of dissent. In the midst of the discussion, a maid entered the room with a basket containing a number of neat little packets, labelled “Fairy Favours,” which were handed round to the party. They were all exactly alike, each containing a dozen of white gloves, with a profusion of white ribbons of different widths. It is needless to add that they proved very welcome to the recipients, and that the duchess rated her young auditory with a due solemnity for their incredulity.

“ The capriciousness and hasty temper which have been sometimes ascribed to the duchess seem hardly reconcilable with the fact that most of her domestics had been for many years in her service. Though she expected them to be prompt in the discharge of their duty, she appeared to be very attentive to their comforts, particularly in ill health. After an unusually quick succession of balls and parties, she removed with her family to the Bedford Hotel, declaring that her domestics must be fatigued, and required a few days’ respite, an intermission which she did not wish to extend to her friends, for she had a dinner-party every day at the hotel. Upon one of these occasions—some little time after the ladies had left the table—the duchess entered the room disguised as a beggar woman, and in a piteous accent solicited charity. The guests referred her to the duke at the top of the room, and the duke, as little prepared for her appearance as his friends, referred her very gravely to the duchess, who, he declared, was exceedingly charitable, and never failed to assist any really deserving object.

“ ‘ Ah, then, your honour,’ whined the pretended mendicant, ‘ your honour’s grace has been quite misinformed, for the duchess never gives a farthing to nobody except for the sake of vanity and ostentation. The newspapers say so; and your honour knows that what the newspapers say *must be true!*’

The ironical tone and the arch expression that accompanied the latter words could only be duly appreciated by those who witnessed them, and who knew how infamously and how perseveringly she had been calumniated by some of the scandalous journals. Most creditable it is to her moral courage that she never suffered herself to be intimidated by any of these attacks, of which the malignity could only be equalled by the falsehood, and which were invented mostly in the hope of extorting money for their suppression.

“Somewhat credulous and prone to superstition, the duchess was a dear lover of ghost stories, not denying her conviction of their veracity. Entertaining once a numerous dinner party, the conversation took this direction, when she related a very circumstantial tale of an apparition, declaring that it had been communicated to her by one who vouched for its truth, and adding that the whole statement bore the clearest internal evidence of an actual occurrence.

“On the next day the writer was again her visitor, when she inquired whether he could still refuse to believe, known sceptic as he was upon the subject of ghosts, a statement so well attested and so trustworthy in all its details. ‘Really, duchess,’ was the reply, ‘no one has a better right to believe it than myself, for every word of it is my own writing

and invention, and it was published several years ago in the New Monthly Magazine, though I admit that it has received several improving touches from your grace's mode of narration.'

"Impossible! you are joking; you cannot surely be serious. I *will* believe my ghost, such a capital ghost as he is, and I will *not* believe you unless you can show me the book to which you allude.'

"This I did next day, when she laughed at her own confidence, but still maintained the merit of her embellishments and corroborations—a claim which the original evoker of the ghost very readily admitted.

"I had been dining at St. Albans House to meet a very small party, when, on returning to the drawing-room, the duchess beckoned me into an inner apartment, rang a hand-bell, and desired the page to bring her casket, instructing him where to find it. On opening it she took out some papers, which she placed in my hand, saying that she wished me to read them. They were letters of considerable length from her late husband, Mr. Coutts, alluding to the many and unjustifiable attempts that had been made to alienate his affections from her, which he vehemently condemned, while he poured forth a fervent and most exalted eulogium upon herself, not only declaring her whole conduct to have been irreproachable, but plainly intimating, as it appeared to

me, the perfect purity of her life, when, from her sudden enrichment and other circumstances, a contrary impression had been produced upon the public mind. I said, as I felt, that these documents must ever afford her a most valuable solace.

“‘Valuable!’ she exclaimed; ‘they are inestimable; I never travel or move without them; and when I am vexed and annoyed I read them over again for the hundredth time, and never without being comforted by their perusal.’

“In animated language she then sang the praises of Mr. Coutts, to whom, indeed, she never alluded except in terms of the most lively and profound gratitude, and winding up her glowing panegyric by saying, ‘I will now show you what I have done for his family.’ She then drew from the casket a small manuscript book, in which were inserted the names of the several relatives, the sums she had paid them annually, and the total to which these payments amounted in the eleven years that had then elapsed since the death of Mr. Coutts. The gross amount, if I recollect rightly, was about three hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds! I know that I calculated it at thirty thousand a-year. Her grace then spoke in the most affectionate terms of Miss Angela Burdett, declaring that she had been singularly fortunate in her baptismal appellation, since she was truly angelic by nature as well as by name. From the introduc-



tion of her name in connexion with the preceding circumstances, I then thought it probable that the bulk of her property would be bequeathed to this lady. That she may long live to enjoy it must be the heartfelt prayer of all those who possess the happiness of her acquaintance.

“ Out of the range of the drama, the duchess laid little claim to extensive literature, nor were her tastes in general of a very grave or severe nature, her notions of amusement generally consisting of fun and merriment, unless we may except her constant and most liberal patronage of actors and the theatre. In disguises, comic recitations and songs, jests, imitations, jugglers, and ventriloquists she took great delight. Mr. Rice was brought down to one of her parties for the express purpose of blackening his face and singing in character the intensely stupid and unaccountably popular song of ‘ Jim Crow ’—the guests crowding around and only allowing him a circle of six feet for his capers, so that the best part of the exhibition was lost. For the same reason Mr. Yates’s humorous songs and imitations were generally rendered much less effective than they would otherwise have been. Her grace, however, was very fond of music, never failing to secure the best vocalists that Brighton could supply, and always giving a decided preference to ballads, dramatic songs, and old English ditties over

the more fashionable Italian school ; a taste which had probably been imbibed in early life.

“ Colonel W—— once said to her, ‘ Why, duchess, I have heard my grandmother sing this old-fashioned ditty.’

“ ‘ Very likely,’ was the reply, ‘ and you ought to like it all the better for that very circumstance ; it must awaken a thousand pleasant recollections and associations of which one can know and feel nothing in your fine Italian operas, with their tiresome recitative and ranting bravuras. Give *me* Miss Cooke and an old English ballad.’

“ That the duchess was capable of appreciating a high order of mental excellence is attested by the fact of her having chosen Miss Sheridan to be the frequent inmate of her house, and occasionally to compose, select, or superintend her entertainments. A more variously gifted or more delightful companion it would have been impossible to find. The writer remembers consulting this lady as to the feasibility of getting up something in the shape of a masque of rather better claims to literary merit than the light and frivolous effusions which were carelessly written on the spur of the moment ; but they decided that an innovation of this nature would occupy too much time, and be of too grave a character either to please the hostess or her guests, with whom quick succession of amusements and

constant stimulants to laughter were the great objects of attraction.

“Of all the entertainments given at Brighton, the hawking parties were indisputably the most novel and attractive; the neighbouring Downs, from their uninclosed and undulating surface, being expressly fitted for their advantageous display. Habited in green velvet, with a black hat and feathers, and a superb diamond hawk suspended from her girdle, the duchess, with her carriage and suite in full state, started for the place of rendezvous. The duke, who is a capital horseman, rode at her side, in the handsome costume of grand falconer, or galloped forward with a hawk on his wrist, attended by numerous falconers and servants in green liveries, and a numerous bevy of horsemen, eager to follow all his movements. After the luckless heron had been thrown up, and the hawk was in full pursuit, it was a gallant and a striking spectacle to see a numerous field of equestrians, of whom a great proportion were females, galloping over the wide Downs in the direction of the chase, now lost in an intervening hollow, now gradually emerging, and racing up the opposite hill—a process repeated two or three times, till the whole cavalcade was finally lost in the distance, or seen halting upon some eminence that overhung the ocean.

“When the field sports were over, the invited

spectators returned to St. Albans House, where music, singing, a grand banquet, and dancing concluded the festivities of the busy day. To those who have not witnessed anything of the sort, the following ballad, hastily written after sharing in the sport, may convey some notion of the morning scene :—

### THE BELLMAN'S NEW BALLAD

*On the grand flight of Hawks and Herons given by their Graces of  
St. Albans, at Brighton, on Easter Tuesday, 1834.*

St. Albans's name was the subject of fame,  
When the duke and the duchess, our pleasures to heighten,  
(Long may both of them live !) left their mansion, to give  
A grand flight of hawks to the people of Brighton.

The morning was bright, 'twas a beautiful sight  
To see all the carriages thronging together ;  
Away they all strike, o'er the Downs to the Dyke,  
While horsemen by hundreds are crossing the heather.

Do you see yonder coach make its stately approach,  
Large badges of silver each rider adorning ?  
Behold, 'tis her grace, who, with smiles on her face,  
Gives a welcome to all, and a cheerful good-morning.

On his spirited bay the duke gallops away,  
Dress'd as England's grand falconer ;—over his shoulder  
A baldrick is cast, while his hand grapples fast  
A hawk that is straining to fly from its holder.

In this picturesque garb, on his well-managed barb,  
He looks like a portrait, so gallant his bearing,  
Of some nobleman bold, by an artist of old,  
Which has leap'd from its frame for the sake of an airing.

See—see—he unties the hood from its eyes,  
And the hawk, wild with joy, from his hand is upspringing :  
As its freedom it feels, how it mounts, how it wheels,  
While the falconer's cry sets the welkin a-ringing.

As that summons is heard by the disciplined bird,  
It slowly descends from its proud elevation ;  
And discovering where the lure flutters in air,  
In circles approaches the falconer's station.

Now, now overhead the first heron has spread  
His wings, and away to the southward is speeding ;  
But marking his track, the hawk darts on his back,  
And down he comes fluttering, croaking, and bleeding.

What wizard shall state the next heron's fate,  
Which, making a long and a gallant resistance,  
From each pounce sprung aside, and its pinions still plied,  
Till *both* birds were lost in the clouds and the distance.

The third flying low, made more sport and more show.  
What a beautiful sight, as the cavalcade follows,  
To see great and small, lords, ladies, and all,  
Gallop off helter-skelter, up heights and down hollows.

With the duke at their head, o'er the country they sped,  
But vain was their flight, for the heron flew faster ;  
And baffling their search, left the hawk in the lurch,  
Which sullen and slowly return'd to its master.

This closes the sports, so homewards resorts  
The crowd, with the day's entertainment delighted ;  
While many repair straight to Regency Square,  
By the duke and the duchess to luncheon invited.

Such a luncheon would ask a whole page for the task  
To be fairly and fully described and commended ;  
Enough to record that no chieftain or lord  
Ever gave to his monarch a banquet more splendid.

When music and song had delighted the throng,  
 All take by the glittering table their places,  
 Merry bumpers to drain of their sparkling champagne  
 In drinking the healths of their generous graces.

They feast and they laugh, and they talk and they quaff,  
 Till the dancers are summon'd upstairs to their duty,  
 When they sport the light toe, until homeward they go,  
 To dream of hawks, herons, balls, banquets, and beauty.

And now for a prayer, which all Brighton may share,  
 From the noble and great to the beggar on crutches,—  
 For on high and on low does their kindness o'erflow,—  
 'Here's health and long life to the duke and the duchess?'

“To the visitants and residents of Brighton the loss of their illustrious mistress of the revels is quite irreparable; for never again can they hope to find united in one person both the will and the power to exercise such constant and such princely hospitalities. She was, indeed, the life of the place during the season. Her arrival was the signal for a more animated social intercourse; her house was the *rendezvous* at which introductions were made, parties formed, excursions and festivities planned, to all of which her ever-ready patronage and assistance ensured success; while the immense expenditure of her own household, and the impulse which she gave to the disbursements of others, were of inestimable advantage to the tradespeople and the humbler classes.

“Of her charities I have said nothing, for her un-

bounded munificence in this respect was so completely a portion of her nature, that it is scarcely necessary to record it. In spite of the prevalent reports to the contrary, the writer can safely declare that he never knew a person more judicious or more free from all ostentation in the mode of distributing her bounties.

“Aware, by long and painful experience, that she was the butt for knaves and impostors of all sorts, she never trusted to the representations, however sad and plausible, which were addressed to her every day in scores of letters, but subjected them, in the first instance, to the investigation of her secretary or treasurer, who made inquiries among such of the permanent residents as were best acquainted with individual cases of distress, as well as with the wants of the public charities and institutions. Rarely, indeed, was the bounty withheld where the claim proved to be just. Independently of these frequent donations, her grace seldom quitted the town without leaving a considerable sum for distribution, entrusting it to residents of good judgment; and generally, as the writer has been informed, accompanying it with two stipulations—first, that the donor’s name was not to appear; secondly, that none of the aid was to be administered in money, but in the payment of rent or debts, or in the supply of fuel, food, or raiment.



“And now may it not be asked, by those who knew the duchess in her early and her later life—in comparative poverty and in splendour,—who were acquainted with her few foibles, and her many excellent qualities, whether she received the fair tribute of esteem and admiration to which she was entitled? To such a question it is much to be feared that a negative answer must be given. Her sudden and unprecedented elevation to the very pinnacle of rank and wealth excited wonder in all, envy in many, hatred in some; feelings that sadly interfered with the formation of a just estimate. The “order” to which she was exalted viewed her with jealousy, as one who was unentitled by birth to admission among their class; the other circles of society could not readily forgive her for being so immeasurably elevated above them in rank and affluence; the scandalous journals perpetually ministering to these invidious feelings, endeavoured to justify them by the most audacious calumnies, which they reiterated with such confidence, that many persons who distrusted them at first eventually believed them to be true; and thus was generated, in various quarters, an erroneous impression, which all the goodness, all the truth, all the affability, and all the condescension of the duchess, could not effectually remove.

“Indebted to her as the writer was, during many

years, for a constant and cordial hospitality, for numerous social hours passed in pleasant reminiscences of the olden times, for a thousand little attentions and kindnesses, unimportant, perhaps, in themselves, but rendered flattering by the friendly and affable mode in which they were conferred, he never can think of the death of the Duchess of St. Albans without a heartfelt pang, and he now feels a melancholy pleasure in offering to her memory this brief and imperfect, but cordial tribute of his profound and grateful respect."

## STANZAS

(BY THE SAME AUTHOR).

*Written on returning from a party given by —— ——, at St. Albans House, Brighton, after the death of the Duchess.*

Forgive me if I cannot share  
This festive scene with kindred heart,  
Forgive me if the smile I wear  
Conceals the tear that longs to start.  
How often in this gay saloon,  
Amid the blaze of beauty's eyes,  
'Mid merry songs, the waltz's tune,  
And ever varied revelries,  
Has she—St. Albans' duchess—cheer'd  
With radiant smile the thronging guests,  
And welcomed all, and all endear'd,  
With cordial mirth and pleasant jests.  
How often have her banquets crown'd  
The pleasures of the flitting night ;  
When all that wealth could spread around  
Was lavish'd for her friends' delight.

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Alas ! her home is now the grim  
Abode where death his power asserts ;  
That voice is hush'd, that eye is dim,  
That joyous heart to dust reverts.

Vain, vain all sounds of mirth elate,  
My thoughts still wander back to her  
Who fill'd these rooms with festive state,  
Who moulders in her sepulchre !

Then, oh, forgive me if I bear  
In this gay scene a sadden'd heart ;  
Forgive me if the smile I wear  
Conceals the tear that longs to start.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Brighton—The shrimp-gatherer—The duchess's bounty—Attacks of the press—A Sunday slanderer—Conversation on the subject—An editor's excuse—The Duchess of St. Albans' taste for books—Old magazines—The duchess at Cheltenham—Circumstance that occurred while there.

THE charities of the duchess at Brighton were bountiful, and many of them the result of those little adventures in which she so much delighted.

Before the hour when the carriages were ordered to come round, she had a great fancy for rambling through the fruit market, down little streets and lanes, and peering into small shops whose stock-in-trade could not have been worth a pound. Anything that looked neat in the windows she would purchase, with commendations of their "tidiness;" and perhaps from a love of "following the fashion" latent in every female breast, the sixpenny customers instantly thronged to a shop which had been

good enough to contribute a supply for the table of a lady. It was quite surprising to see one of these little *boutiques* after a visit from the duchess. In the course of a few days the stock would be increased to double its former extent; and the numerous customers, making themselves civil to the now consequential shop-owner, attested the run which their articles commanded.

In one of her walks the duchess passed beyond the limits of the houses on the western side of the town, and while looking from the summit of the cliffs she perceived something moving below about the size of a dog. Curiosity induced her to descend with her companions; and on nearer approach they discovered it was a very small child, so entirely engrossed in collecting scraps of drift-wood as to be unconscious of their proximity.

The day was a wretchedly cold one in November; and the party, well wrapped in furs, contemplated this miserable little thin child, its hands nearly torpid, its feet in the pools, without shoes or stockings, and its dress having short sleeves, the skirt dabbling in the water while stooping for the broken wood.

The duchess was shocked at such an example of human misery; but so many artful exhibitions were arranged to attract her compassionate notice that she resolved in this instance to make strict inquiry,

which the poor child seemed to think a great interruption to his collecting fuel.

“What are you going to do with that wood?”

“Light mother’s fire.”

“To boil your dinner?”

“No; to boil shrimps.”

“And have you caught any shrimps?”

“Mother’s out all mornin’ a catchin’ on ’em.”

“Where does she live?”

The child pointed towards a wretched hovel, which none of the party had supposed to be a human habitation. The duchess told the little creature that she should send some dry wood for kindling the fire, and desired it to lead the way to its home.

Never was there a more desolate-looking hovel than the cheerless place they entered. A wide fireplace, with the remains of an extinguished fire, over which hung a large iron pot, filled with water, “because,” as the child said, “he was not strong enough to turn it over the fire when lighted; so mother had hung it before she went out, and would scold if the water was not boiling for the shrimps on her return.”

The glass of the window was all broken, with the exception of one small pane, and replaced with hay, which let in the chilly sea-air. The cupboards and shelves, which were curiously examined by the duchess, lest the appearance of misery might be de-

ceptive, were quite empty; and, in fact, the whole place gave evidence of genuine wretchedness.

The duchess instantly conceived a plan of effecting a sort of magical alteration in the appearance of the cottage before the return of the woman from her cold occupation; and the party set off for the town, promising the misgiving child that they were going for some wood for his fire. Within a short time the duchess brought down a carriage loaded with bread, potatoes, a leg of mutton, and all the requisites for a dinner, together with the materials for dressing it. The little child had struck a light in the meantime, and kindled the embers, so that the fire soon blazed to cheer them. Then arrived two or three glaziers, who soon restored the light and excluded the air from the windows, which were presently hung with nice curtains; and a decent table and chairs, with plates and dishes, were put near the fire. A comfortable bed and a cot were placed in the adjoining room; the meat was put down and covered over, so that the poor woman might at first think it was only the water for her shrimps; and the wondering child taken to St. Albans House, to be dressed and kept out of the way of explaining what had happened, until the mother should have had some time to conjecture as to the source of her good fortune!

A servant was left secretly to watch for the mother's return, and to bring the child home imme-



diately, lest she might be alarmed at his absence, but on her entrance the man heard her scream so loudly that he forgot his caution, in fear lest she had met with an accident. The poor woman, however, exhausted and famishing, had been overcome by the sight of all the additions for her comfort, and had fallen insensible. When she recovered she found herself on her new bed, a warm cloak round her, and the little miserable wood-gatherer changed into a young dandy, in such a smart frock and trousers, shoes, stockings, cloak, and cap, that his head was nearly turned; and he had restored her to consciousness by vociferating, "Mammy, mammy, look at me!"

When it was discovered by two or three negligent neighbours that the poor shrimp-woman had obtained notice and assistance, they all crowded forward to bear testimony to the good conduct and hard fate of the struggling creature.

She had been a fisherman's wife, and had lived in a "bettermost" class of cottage during her husband's lifetime; but the coast of Sussex is proverbially fatal to those who follow his occupation, and he had been upset and drowned in one of the sudden squalls so common there in autumn. The widow, having no other resource, had removed to the comfortless hovel in which she now resided, and had picked up a precarious subsistence by netting

shrimps ; an occupation which kept her dress saturated with water for several hours daily. During the time of her employment, her young child was obliged to collect what scraps of drift wood he could find, in order to prepare her merchandize for the market.

The duchess was singularly interested by this woman, who had struggled on in uncomplaining misery, instead of lazily throwing herself on the commiseration of others. Her manners were respectable also—quite equal to attending in some humble shop ; and this idea fortunately sprang up in the mind of her patroness.

A little shop was found to be let, at some distance from Brighton ; and the amusement of the duchess was to stock it with the most “ miscellaneous contents ” that ever were assembled ; one chaise went there completely filled with the stock of a toy-shop, for she bought up the contents of sundry little shops in Brighton, to the delighted wonder of their vendors, who must have speculated in some astonishment as to what use the Duchess of St. Albans could find for three dozen of dolls, six dozen of penny trumpets, nine dozen of peg tops, and twenty dozen of marbles. Then a poor linendraper died, leaving a widow who could not dispose of his collection of old-fashioned ribbons and faded silks ; but these were all taken at the cost of first-rate goods

by the charitable duchess, and they were sent to the new shop among the miscellanies. Finally, when there was not space left for a mouse to have turned round in this magazine of "notions," the poor shrimp-woman and her son were transported there, and made "monarchs of all they surveyed."

In the course of a short time, the new shop-keeper established a very good trade in her neighbourhood. The duchess still continued her patronage and supplies, and when the parties were last at Brighton they all drove over to see how comfortable she had rendered an industrious fellow-creature, who survives and laments her patroness, often narrating this history of her worth.

In spite of her benevolent disposition, no lady in England was ever made the subject of such continued and uncalled-for attacks of the press as the Duchess of St. Albans. A gentleman who dined in company with her gives the following account of her unaffected allusion to these annoyances. She inquired if he had seen the preceding Sunday's newspapers; and on receiving a negative reply, she said, "I appear in several places in them, but I am sorry to say they do not make me utter very witty speeches. For example: 'Our duchess asks, why should Taglioni and herself set up a brewery together? Because one can *hop* and the other can *malt*.' I wish they could prove their words in the

latter part," continued her grace, "for I envy everyone who is well enough to take a glass of nice bitter table beer, which I dare not do."

Someone expressed surprise that her grace should be the constant mark for attacks from the press though she never gave the smallest provocation. She smiled sadly, and replied, "At my time of life I have outlived all sense of annoyance from external causes, and, indeed, I defy them now to invent anything worse against me than they have already done; but when I was young, and the attached wife of the venerable man to whom I owe everything, these unjust accusations used to destroy my peace and health more than the most malicious writer could have intended."

It was asked if she had ever traced any of the authors? She replied, "Yes, several; sometimes by their own carelessness, and very often by anonymous communications from their associates; but I never condescended to take any notice of such detection. Soon after I was married to Mr. Coutts, he received a letter from a Captain Ashe, dated King's Bench, stating that he had in his possession some papers regarding Miss Mellon, which unless Mr. Coutts sent him £50 he would publish in a Sunday paper. Mr. Coutts wrote to him laconically, 'Do so,' and sent the man's letter to Sir Richard Birnie. No publication appeared, but in about a fortnight Mr.

Coutts received a second King's Bench epistle, stating that the former was written under an erroneous impression derived from false papers respecting Miss Mellon; and the writer was now so anxious to do her justice that he meant to write a long memoir in her praise if Mr. Coutts would relieve his present embarrassment by £50. The answer to this was communicated by one of Sir Richard Birnie's men, who on his own part gave the literary gentleman advice to pursue some other more reputable branch of his profession in future."

Someone remarked it was probable, if the truth were known, that not one of the editors or proprietors of the papers had the slightest ill-feeling towards her, and that the paragraphs were furnished by poor, distressed contributors, who made their stories first, and fitted the names to them afterwards, without personal malice against the parties themselves.

The duchess answered, "I know that supposition is correct in some instances, because one of my physicians was called in the other day to attend the editor of the ——, who inquired, 'Well, how is your good friend the duchess?'

"'How can you call her *good* when you are always abusing her?' demanded the doctor.

"'Psha! what have I to do with the abuse?' returned the editor; 'her sudden elevation has made her name familiar to *every* class of our readers,

and the public are more amused with a matter affixed to *her* name than to one of which they have never heard. Some papers began by attacking her perhaps from mercenary motives, with the hope of being "bought up;" and we continue it for the fun of the thing.'"

The duchess took in all the Sunday papers which attacked her, and had them placed in the duke's library, for the benefit of those gentlemen guests who might wish to evince their independence of character by repeating ridicule respecting the individual whom they had adulated at dinner.

Her taste in general literature was such that her connexions wondered why she admitted papers into her house which families usually did not take in. The duchess would reply, "No man invited to my house is obliged to read them, although they are in the duke's library; and if I forbid their appearance it will instantly be said that the paragraphs are too true for me to allow them to be read. My only fear, now that so much has been invented against me, is that the attacks may be discontinued for want of subject, and then the world will say I have been weak and foolish enough to buy off the writers."

The duchess read so much and so rapidly that, together with the power of obtaining books on their first day of sale, she was always able to criticize the new works with the *first* of the critics; and she had

been, besides, so thoroughly grounded in the old poets that her judgment was admirable.

Never was an accusation more unjust than to attribute to her any coarseness of taste, for those who knew her latterly say that her taste was refined even to fastidiousness; and when it is stated that among our standard works "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "The Simple Story" were her great favourites, after her idol Shakspeare, it will give a clearer impression of her literary judgment than any description could impart.

In the perusal of fiction her spirits were excited or depressed, according to the nature of the tale, more than can be easily conceived; and anything of the supernatural kind took such extraordinary hold on her vivid imagination, that her friends have passed many an unjust sentence against the cleverness of a tale, in order to prevent her from reading it and losing the entire night's rest by its horrors.

In her summer rural excursions through different parts of the kingdom the first demand of the duchess at the country inns was, whether they had any *old magazines*? and she would be rendered happy for the rest of the day by the production of a ragged regiment of "Ladies' Magazines," "Fashionable Miscellanies," "Polite Remembrancers," and such-like forgotten veterans of the last half-century.

Nothing delighted her so much as finding in



these books an account of a drama, with "the part of so-and-so, by Miss Mellon." She would brighten up, though ever so ill, and relate to her friends the most piquant anecdotes connected with each representation, with all the various cross-readings and wrong-readings of inexperienced rehearsals.

In 1832, when the duchess visited Cheltenham for the purpose of erecting a second monument to the memory of her mother, a circumstance occurred showing how upon occasions she *could* act when stung by those who endeavoured to bring her into ridicule; and which made her determine never again to visit that town.

It appears that previously an artist, living at that time in Cheltenham, executed a group of several figures in lithography, being caricatures of well-known individuals, or those whose appearance might be striking to newly-arrived persons; and in this picture was a representation of the duchess, amounting to a somewhat laughable likeness of her rather portly figure—at least, so says report—for the stone and impressions are now altogether gone.

Some of the other parties in the group, who thought themselves designedly "misrepresented," resolved to misrepresent the artist's design to the lady, and made her excessively indignant at their account of her "being caricatured all over the town."

The gentleman who was at that time master of the ceremonies, having discovered that the matter had been viewed seriously (a very uncommon fate for one of this artist's designs), advised that the circulation of the print should be restrained, as so many felt annoyed at being introduced into it. The artist instantly wrote to call in all that he had distributed for sale, and when these were returned he tore them into fragments, broke the stone on which he had drawn the group, and sent the whole broken remains to the duchess, with a note expressing his regret for having offended her and others, assuring her that he had not intended any disrespect, but as an atonement he sent all the impressions he could find, together with the stone destroyed by himself, so that no more could be printed.

The duchess, of course, was quite satisfied by such concession, and sent a most liberal compensation for the loss.

Unfortunately, some few copies which had been sent to a distant place were not returned ; and during her visit as Duchess of St. Albans in the year 1832, when she thought the whole matter was at rest, some acquaintance found out these unlucky, forgotten pictures, and purchased one for her, she having always supposed there were none on sale.

The inference arising from this was, that the artist had deceived her ; and that his apparent re-

gret and good-feeling had only been feigned to induce her to forget it, while the sale of the print was clandestinely continued. Having taken this view (for which there really was conclusive, though erroneous, evidence), she would not hear of the subject again; all attempt at apology being viewed by her as of the same nature as the first, which she now decided had been insincere.

Her resolution was then formed never to visit Cheltenham, notwithstanding her partiality for the town, while the artist in question resided there; and this resolution was never broken.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Fêtes at Holly Lodge—Newspaper accounts of them—Ludicrous anecdote of a Staffordshire squire—Mode of subscribing to charities—Brighton—Flight of hawks there—Ingratitude—Misrepresentation—Proposed compliment by the citizens.

ON the 16th of June, the duchess always gave one of her celebrated fêtes at Holly Lodge, that being the anniversary of her marriage with the duke. This villa, since bequeathed to the Duke of St. Albans, is as perfectly quiet as though it were in the midst of the New Forest, or on Salisbury Plain. The following account of these admired fêtes is from a magazine published in 1837 :—

“About four o’clock the guests generally arrived, being obliged to fall into the line of carriages some distance from the entrance, and they drove up a long circuitous avenue through the grounds, whose large trees did not indicate their proximity to London. The long walk to the house was spread with carpet, and down its centre were immense

orange trees (covered with blossoms and fruit), gifts from the King of the French and others to the duchess. The lawn before the house was covered with sofas and lounging chairs, the trees around all hung with wreaths, and hoops of flowers, and rich ribbon streamers many yards in length. A tent, fitted up with pink and white silk, interspersed with looking-glasses, formed the orchestra for the concert, which included all the principal foreign and English singers of the season, Grisi, Malibran, Lablache, Tamburini, Rubini, Ivanhoff, Balfe, the Stockhausens, &c.

“Between the intervals of the singing, the guards’ bands played in a hollow of the grounds, and there were Chinese jugglers and tumblers exhibiting on the slope, and groups of theatrical gipsies encamped under the trees at a distance. Next appeared the *Adelphi corps de ballet*, as the old English morris-dancers.

“In the lower lawn were targets, butts, and all the appliances for archery; but no one left the neighbourhood of the house, which surprised strangers, until they heard a deafening gong, when the whole five hundred guests darted into the house, tents, and temporary rooms, in which the breakfast-dinner was laid; and the scramble for places was something perfectly ludicrous among high-bred persons, long accustomed to similar

entertainments. The decorations of the various tables were sumptuous pieces of plate, some of them groups in gold. The duchess never allowed Gunter to send any china, &c., the whole party being served on plate and exquisite china of her own.

“Every luxury was of course in profusion, but it was often to be wished that the champagne had not been so plentiful. It is said there were a certain set of dowagers of high rank who were proverbial for sitting at more than one of the tables. Thinking that no one’s attention was called, they have been seen to take two repasts in different rooms, departing with a look of inquiry towards a quiet tent, perhaps hoping for a third. As all these old women had elegant establishments of their own, nothing there could have been unusual to them, and their childish eagerness is totally unaccountable.

“The gardeners used to be dressed as Swiss peasants. After dinner, a foreign cow, decorated with garlands and wearing the Swiss “*Clochette de Vache*,” was milked, while German or Alpine singers sung round her; and the guests partook of sillabub from splendid crystal glasses.

“After coffee, the party strolled to the top of *Traitor’s Hill*, in the grounds, preceded by the band. On the summit of this hill, from whence is commanded a distinct view of London, the grand

falconer used to give three or four flights of hawks after pigeons. Nothing could be more picturesque than the appearance of the German falconers, two dressed in green velvet, and the third in orange; they wore white gauntlets nearly to the elbow, and their high-crowned hats had three broad bands of gold, and a black plume from the summit. One of them, being stationed at some distance below the hill, swung a dead pigeon attached to a string to lure the falcon, who seemed rejoiced to stretch his long wings, which he scarcely ever closed. At length, with a wild cry from another falconer opposite, a live pigeon would be let loose, and off went the hawk after it, cleaving the air with a steady flight, and trying to rise above his victim; when, after two or three dozen circlings, the pigeon generally sought and found safety among the thick trees, in which neither hawk nor falconer could discover it.

“On returning to the house, they found the front of it illuminated in wreaths of pale green lamps, exactly the tint of the glow-worm. Every tree was glittering with the same pretty illumination, and the sloping lawn was strewn with these artificial glow-worms, which seeming to join in the distance with the clustered lights of London, had quite an “Arabian Nights” effect. There were two bands for dancing, one in the tent, the other in the con-



servatory, which opened into a ball-room festooned with garlands, and having the lustres decorated with flowers.

“ These parties generally amounted to five or six hundred guests, all the *élite* of London beauty, rank, and fashion ; and with the exquisite dresses, beautiful grounds, fragrant exotics, fine music, and scenic representations, formed a most delightful change during the balls of a London spring. The expense is something too enormous even to guess at ; but we know a bachelor who wished to return civilities by a similar rural musical fête, and the estimate exceeded £2,000.”

A literary gentleman, the proprietor of a newspaper, has obligingly sent the following account of a conversation with the Duchess, regarding a matter in which she has been much misrepresented.

He had just then entered on a periodical, and he waited on the Duchess to request her leave to obtain some description of her recent fête at Holly Lodge, with the names of the guests, as desirable for the fashionable part of his first number. In mentioning this to the Duchess (who he had understood was partial to a blazoning forth of her grand hospitalities), he fancied the proposal was just what she would like, but her reply was —

“ If it would be an amusement to you, sir, to write two or three lines about my little party, I

will not say don't do it, though I have no wish to see it done; but as for the names of my guests I would not give them to anyone, and my servants are strictly ordered to refuse them to the persons who daily apply for a list to make paragraphs."

Perceiving by her manner that she would really rather it were not done, he, of course, promised that the notice should be compressed to the limits she had named, but he could not help asking why her grace had such an aversion to seeing the names of her guests in print, when it was generally done after the parties of others of her rank?

She replied —

"My position is a peculiar one, sir. Elevated suddenly from a professional career, I have, however, the honour of knowing an extensive and distinguished circle; it would seem vanity in me if I published the names of those I have the pleasure of receiving; and although I am extremely gratified by their company, it is not a description of pride which would be increased by a display of their names. Therefore my servants all understand that they forfeit their situations if they send accounts of my parties for publication."

Yet this was the woman who was said to have *paid* for paragraphs about her entertainments.

If some persons, however, tried to escape this species of notice, others court notoriety to such

excess that they pay dearly for it. The Duchess frequently adduced an instance of this from the reminiscences of her younger days.

In Staffordshire there was a Captain Apthorpe, who existed only for publicity, and every county meeting, assizes, or election was sure to be graced with his name, inserted by himself through the medium of his friend (though he always expressed a wonder how it came there) in a country paper, to the owner of which he used to give dinners. When his son came of age the important event was to be celebrated by a fancy ball, and, as he was a great patron of the drama, "Little Harriot Mellon" was invited to plan the decorations and family costumes, and afterwards to be one of the guests.

On the eventful morning they were up by day-break, and never was anything so gay as their ball-room, wreathed with flowers. "Little Harriot" had listened patiently, for the twentieth time before breakfast, to the intelligence that "Sir Timothy Trumpery was to open the country-dance with the Honourable Mrs. Flam, as being *the* persons of distinction," when the post letters came in, and a spiteful-looking paper square-toes, with a black seal, announced the death of an antique female relation. Captain Apthorpe was inclined to put off grieving until the ball was over, but the obituary of the London papers contained the intelligence also ;

therefore there was no alternative but to close the shutters and send out cards of "regret that a melancholy family event prevented," &c.

Miss Mellon, who had never seen a fancy ball in those days, said she never felt so angry with anyone as with the old lady who thus died a day too early. But her childish disappointment was nothing compared with the dreadful agitation of Captain Apthorpe: he paced through the garlanded dark rooms, and raved about "the papers! the papers!" until they thought he had lost his senses.

The next day's post brought an elucidation of his uneasiness, for the London journals contained long accounts of the splendid fancy ball given by Captain Apthorpe on the occasion of his son coming of age. Then followed descriptions of the decorations, the supper, the fancy dresses, the distinguished guests; among whom "Sir Timothy Trumpery opened the ball with the Honourable Mrs. Flam in the characters of Romeo and Juliet," and the party were so delighted with their host's hospitality that they did not separate until "morn's rosy fingers oped the gates of day." In order to avoid delay Captain Apthorpe had actually sent off his account two days previously, so that the flattering description should meet the eyes of his guests while the music of his ball was still ringing on their senses, and all this would have been wonderfully well contrived if the

old lady had not so inopportunately died to counteract his literary and festive activity.

To return, however, to the Duchess and her dislike of ostentation. When she subscribed to any charity in which the names were to be given in the advertisements, she was always anxious to avoid the reputation of giving a larger sum than others. Hence she always declined to *head* a subscription list, but waited until she could learn what was given by other persons of high rank. Then she would allow her name to appear for the same amount, but gave, as a private donation, perhaps twice as much in value.

During the time of the severe distress among the Spitalfields weavers (in 1836), the Duchess of St. Albans publicly subscribed only about the same amount as the Queen and some of the female nobility, but she gave to an upholsterer a private order for a suite of satin damask curtains for the whole of the sitting-rooms in Stratton Street, *five hundred yards of material at one guinea per yard*, which the party employed was to give as his own order to the committee.

In addition to this she constantly purchased boxes containing many dozen pieces of ribbon from small shops, in order to exhaust their stock, so as to encourage them to send in fresh orders for the unfortunate weavers, and she wore nothing but Spitalfields materials from that time.

In March, 1837, the ducal party left Brighton for the last time, the Duchess having received a series of anonymous letters (and other annoyances regarding her charities, ever since Christmas), which became so disagreeable that she resolved to leave the place altogether. This is accounted for by the Brighton inhabitants in the following manner:—

While at Brighton, the Duke of St. Albans was, as we have seen, in the habit of giving a flight of hawks on a piece of waste land called the Dyke. This barren spot is the general rendezvous for steeplechases, races, games, &c., and also for the throwing off of the hounds; a species of “no man’s land,” which everybody considers they have an equal right to use.

On the morning succeeding one of the falconry fêtes, the duke received an application for money as compensation for the loss a farmer had sustained by the sport having taken place on the Dyke, from which he stated that he had to drive some sheep to a field for the day. As one of these morning meetings was considered to be more serviceable among the tradespeople, hotels, and posting-houses, than three or four balls, and the Dyke being a barren waste, apparently without a proprietor, a claim for compensation for that which had been beneficial to the town bore an appearance of a speculation on the duke’s liberality; he being asked to pay for what had never been demanded from another.

This idea was always particularly grating to the feelings of the duchess, from the supposition that, if they suffered their natural liberality to be imposed upon, they would be doubtless ridiculed afterwards for their compliance with such demands.

Inquiry was made as to the compensation required for the sheep having been driven to another field of the farmer's for one night; and the amount (some pounds) was ordered to be paid; but the duke sent his falconers and hawks the next day to Holly Lodge, since the sport was said to have done injury to the inhabitants, instead of service, as was intended.

To this was added another annoyance. The duchess had already given twelve hundred charity tickets to the poor (not her own regular pensioners); and these tickets were orders for two pounds of beef, two loaves, a quantity of potatoes, coals, and groceries; the orders for supplying which were given to various tradesmen of Brighton, so as to be useful to all grades.

There was also a regular charity, by a subscription fund, raised in the town, and several poor persons came with heavy complaints to the duchess, that "in consequence of having received her grace's charity tickets at Christmas, they were refused a participation in the subsequent town



distribution.” Most likely these persons misrepresented the matter: for the poor, who receive such charitable aid, seem occasionally inclined to repay it with extra malice and ingratitude. Be this as it may, they urged on the duchess that the town-charity refused to co-operate with hers; and so many of them tormented her with this story while making fresh applications for her tickets, that she became fully impressed with the notion that an unhandsome return had been made by those whom she had endeavoured to benefit.

Independent of these annoyances, many disagreeable anonymous letters were addressed to her grace, and she at last determined to quit the town altogether. On the 1st of March, therefore, the whole establishment left Brighton, never to return.

The day after they arrived in London the Duke of St. Albans received a lawyer’s letter purporting to be at the instance of the Rev. Mr. Wayner, Mr. Kemp, of Kemptown, who was at that time the county member, and several gentlemen residing in and near Brighton. The purport of the letter was a warning to the duke not to take any horse, carriage, &c., on the Dyke, under penalty of prosecution for trespass. This was dated from the firm of most respectable professional parties at Brighton.

The name of Mr. Kemp having been used, and he

being well known to the duke and duchess, and very anxious for the hawking to be continued, to him they applied, and received for answer that the whole was a forgery. The solicitors at Brighton, whose names the letter bore, had never even heard of it; and the gentlemen whose signatures were counterfeited, after denying it indignantly, insisted on offering rewards to discover the parties in order to prosecute them for forgery. But the duchess made it a particular request that nothing further should be done, as she would settle the matter by giving up her house and never revisiting Brighton.

When this became known, she was inundated with letters, petitions, entreaties, or visits, according to the class of the parties, begging her to revoke such a determination, which would only gratify the malicious disappointed few, while it would be a serious injury to the many.

A meeting was called at the Town-hall, at which a general expression of thanks was voted by a crowded assemblage to the Duchess of St. Albans, as a great patroness of the town, together with a respectful request (in order to give permanent expression to such an opinion) "that the duchess would allow any artist she would select to make a whole length portrait of her, to be placed in the hall with those of the king and queen, as one of the benefactors of Brighton."

It was impossible for any meeting to pay a more flattering compliment, and the duchess felt much gratified that so great a majority seemed to have understood her actions. But she could not forget the anonymous minority; and after sending grateful acknowledgments for the distinction conferred by the town meeting, declined having her portrait placed as described, not having hitherto complied with any similar application. Her resolution was taken never to re-enter the town, and this nothing could change.\* The great wonder is, why she ever lived there, when the sea air, it is said, always relaxed her system and made her nervous, even while travelling along the coast; the friendly atmosphere for her constitution being the pure, dry, elastic air of a mountain, or even of Holly Lodge.

\* Three years previously, the duke and duchess received from the inhabitants of Brighton a superb green silk flag, of great dimensions and richness, emblazoned with the St. Albans crest, the coronet, a falcon, and a most gratifying inscription.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Illness—Attachment to Holly Lodge—Progress of Illness—  
Removal to Mr. Coutts's room—Singular belief—Closing  
Scene.

IN the first week in June, 1837, a great increase of what is usually called nervousness being apparent, it was considered that if the duchess could be kept perfectly quiet, her chances of recovery would become greater. Hence, all visitors to Stratton Street were necessarily excluded, for her high spirits were so easily animated by the presence of friends, that they would have been raised instantly for their entertainment. Although she used to be on her couch perfectly tranquil, without any pain beyond the usual suffering in her right side, yet a gradual increase of debility was manifested.

Her appetite, at all times bad, was now quite gone, and she no longer had the power to eat the most trifling quantity of animal food. Her favourite soda water, too (which perhaps had tended to injure

her health for years), was abandoned without any hesitation when the medical attendants prohibited its use; and they advised a substitution of weak ale, as the small quantity they could induce her to take would contain more nutriment than any other aliment. To this she consented without a murmur; for her gentle submission to every one around, and her grateful expressions for every act of assistance and care, were the admiration of those who witnessed her last days.

Once more she longed to visit Holly Lodge, that favourite toy among all her vast possessions. This desire was instantly complied with; and she requested to be removed there in the carriage in which Mr. Coutts had gone thither the last time before his decease.

While at Holly Lodge no one could be more perfectly calm and collected in mind, though her bodily strength daily decreased. She was drawn round the grounds in the pony-chair of Mr. Coutts, and went to the summit of the hill, conversing with the gardeners and other persons respecting their different employments. But she probably at this time had formed an idea that she should not see Holly Lodge again. She requested to be driven in the chair round every walk and alley of the grounds, along the paddocks, and up to the eminence which commands a view of London; during which

little excursion she remained silent and absorbed, seeming to take a mental retrospect and sad farewell of its numerous beauties.

When her excursion was to be for the last time through Highgate, which had benefited so largely by her charities, she minutely described, with her usual tenacity of former occurrences, the circle which the little equipage was to take; and it was the exact circuit made by Mr. Coutts and herself when he passed through the streets of that place for the last time.

After these two fancies had been satisfied, she expressed a wish to return to Stratton Street, lest she might become too weak to be removed there, to die in the room where her benefactor expired: a wish which had taken paramount possession of her mind.

Accordingly, she was removed again to London, there being still no visible change for the worse in her health, beyond the increasing weakness, and the continual pain of the right side. Up to this time (about a fortnight before her demise) she had retained a clear recollection of everyone, and the perfect use of her faculties; but having been now upwards of two months without any sustenance, beyond a wine-glass full of ale twice in the twenty-four hours, the consequent exhaustion made her memory fail occasionally. Strange to say, this

only regarded the place where she was staying ; for she knew all the individuals around her ; so that if she momentarily forgot exactly where she was reposing, she would address the attendants by name accurately, and request them to “take her to Stratton Street, to die on the bed where Tom Coutts had expired.”\*

She conversed lucidly with the duke and others around her ; and instead of her usual impatience of contradiction, she would extend her hand and thank them for their kindness.

One morning, in the last week of July, she perfectly recovered from the temporary forgetfulness of where she was living, and finding that her bed had been placed in the large drawing-room below stairs, for the advantage of the air, she gave orders to be removed instantly to Mr. Coutts's room. It was then mentioned that Lady Guilford was in town, and anxious to see her : the duchess gently replied, “I will see her to-morrow, when they have laid me on her father's last bed.”

That evening she was carried to the room on

\* At the *post-mortem* examination of the duchess was discovered the very sufficient and distressing reason why her Grace had for a length of time been unable to take sufficient food : the entrance into the stomach had contracted so as to be nearly closed. It is said that she took so little sustenance for some years past that it is surprising how she maintained her strength, her healthy appearance, and the fulness of her figure.



which her imagination had so long dwelt; and, whether from the motion of being removed, or from some internal change preparatory to her decease, all pain left her afflicted side—a relief which her superstitious fancy instantly ascribed to the influence of the room and its furniture.

In the early part of the following day Lady Guilford went through this trying scene, which no doubt tended to break up the remains of her own declining health; for her decease followed within six weeks the demise of the duchess.

She received Lady Guilford placidly, saying, “I am so happy to-day, because your father’s spirit is breathing upon me, as he promised; and also he has taken the shape of a little bird, singing at my window; just as he said he would come back if he could.”

This singular belief in the realization of Mr. Coutts’s death-bed promise of revisiting her as a bird, or in the invisible influence of a soft breathing, was not an idea conceived on her death-bed only. Those who knew her intimately since 1822 can testify her reliance on this fanciful promise during her most healthful and joyous days.

The boudoir in Stratton Street had three long windows towards the garden; the trees in the latter contained numerous birds, that enjoyed their good quarters undisturbed and well fed; these little

creatures frequently pecked and fluttered near the windows; and whenever this occurred, it is said that the duchess would open the window, throw out food for the applicants, and leave the window open with the hope of one entering; while, for the remainder of the morning, she would be as happy as a child whose absent playmate had returned.

To those who have no power of believing such matters, this weakness must have carried with it a certain degree of ridicule, although none would have been so cruel or insulting as to disturb her faith in what thus innocently gave much consolation and support to the believer. At first, while viewed under the prejudice which prevailed against her most trivial actions, this romantic superstition regarding one so advanced in life as Mr. Coutts, notwithstanding he had been her only benefactor, would seem so unusual, that it must have tempted the observation, "this is all very well *acted*;" but a deeper insight into her character always brought the conviction that, at all times, there was not a sufficiency of "*acting*" in her artless nature even to procure from the world common justice, much less a false reputation for sentiment.

Among the anomalies in the character of Mr. Coutts was, that the rigid man of business had a fanciful superstition in some matters (which is not uncommon among his clever countrymen) and a

pure appreciation of the poetry of existence. A beautiful prospect—a fine day in the country—a melancholy romance—a well-wrought poem were enjoyed by him with the fervour of a youthful mind. Thus, the idea of revisiting the object of his solicitude in the form of a little bird, or of making known his proximity by a soft breathing near her, was exactly consistent with the mixture of superstition and romance which formed the unguessed portion of character in this highly-gifted but eccentric man.

The duchess easily yielded credence to the opinion of those she considered sensible, and Mr. Coutts she looked up to and cited as one whose judgment no one was to be mad enough to question. In the same manner that others quote the philosophical remarks of Bacon, Newton, or Locke, she used, from the earliest time of knowing her benefactor until her own last days, to say, "*Mr. Coutts said so!*" which, in her mind, was a decision beyond appeal. He had solemnly promised this fantastic return after death, and therefore she implicitly believed that its accomplishment was unquestionable.

Her reliance on it was unshaken while her faculties remained unimpaired; and when these were slightly dulled by approaching dissolution, her faith in the promise was "strong in death."

With these powerful bonds of superstition holding

her in thralldom, would it have been possible for the mind of a dying woman to be so perfectly calm, so admirably resigned, if it were conscious of any evil deed? With her firm belief in retributive justice on earth by spiritual agency, if she had ever voluntarily acted wrong in any way, would she, with a weakened mind, have absolutely courted the terrors or fanciful dangers of that apartment in which she sought her late husband's spiritual reappearance, if the soul of either had one spot of evil through her misconduct?

Her perfectly happy dying hours, attested by those who surrounded the couch, speak more for her purity of conscience than any laboured eulogium or vindication of the witnesses who are now (too late) springing up to bear sorrowing testimony of how little her worth was appreciated.

After the interview with Lady Guilford, the Misses Burdett were admitted again to see one who had loved and indulged them so thoroughly for years. On being introduced into the apartment and named to her, their presence was only acknowledged in a similarly calm manner to that which she had evinced in the instance of Lady Guilford. This was the first proof that her consciousness was fading, for her customary greeting to them had been always of the most animated and affectionate nature.

These were the last individuals, not resident in the house, who saw the Duchess of St. Albans before her death.

Her strength was now so rapidly sinking that it was considered desirable to try the effect of stimulants; a small quantity of brandy was therefore given in sago; but the total absence of food rendered her system so susceptible, that it was found her frame would not bear a repetition of the experiment.

Like the generality of nervously imaginative persons, the duchess, even when in health, had always *one* especial source of terror: in her case, this was a constant dread of house-breakers, who would attempt to take her life, and leave her wounded, in lingering pain; and this too common fear made her frequently fancy the sound of footsteps, locks turning, and the various suggestions of mistaken terror. The details of any crime in the newspapers seldom failed to increase her fears. Indeed, at the time of the murder of the Marrs family, in Ratcliffe Highway, many years ago, she was so nervous, that she had a Bow Street officer for weeks to walk before her door.

As the cowering little tenants of the nursery seem to take a fearful pleasure in hearing ghost stories, which bewilder them with terror, so the poor duchess had a resistless propensity for reading extraordinary tales of robberies and murders in different countries and times, until her retentive memory was a perfect cabinet of these tales of

terror, which frightened herself even in their repetition.

The recurrence of these ill-judged studies to her memory seems to have been the sole interruption to her ease of mind. When it was found necessary to administer narcotics, their effect called up some of these alarming recollections, so that she fancied strange footsteps were near, and thought her time was come to be the victim of cruelty; but this subsided towards morning, and she awakened to her usual placidity, thanking the watchers for their attention, and requesting that none would grieve for her, as she felt no pain.

On the night of Saturday, 5th of August, she was unusually calm; her complexion, which of late years had been extremely dark, became pale, as if bloodless, and her neck and throat comparatively fair. Those who knew what such changes portended were aware of the near approach of her dissolution. She conversed with the Duke of St. Albans (whom she recognized the latest of anyone near her) for a few minutes, and with clearness; these were the last audible words she uttered, although her lips moved during the succeeding hours, evidently in prayer, by the slight motion of her hands. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 6th she opened her eyes with apparent consciousness, and turned them slowly round, resting her gaze on each of the

eight individuals who stood by the bed—namely, the Duke of St. Albans (who had sat up during several preceding nights), Doctor Yates, Mr. Roche (the resident medical attendant), Mr. Harrison, two nurses, and two other female attendants. Her lips moved as her eyes rested on the parties, but no utterance followed. When she came to the duke, who stood close to her, a faint pressure from the hand that was held in his indicated that he was recognized. At twenty-five minutes past ten on Sunday morning, while sustained by the duke's arm, she peacefully breathed her last.

Her frequently-expressed wish regarding her own demise was, that it should take place on a Sunday; which was thus fulfilled. In reply to a demand why she desired so fervently to die on the Sabbath, she answered, "As it was on the Sunday after the crucifixion that the resurrection took place, those who believe in their salvation by the Lord Jesus would naturally wish to leave the earth on the same day, in the humble hope of gaining admission where there are many mansions."



## CHAPTER XIX.

Retrospective and supplementary remarks—Miss Mellon's first appearance in old Drury Lane Theatre—Its enormous dimensions—Miss Mellon highly esteemed in provincial circles—Her talents as an actress—*Vivâ-voce* offer of marriage by a midshipman—Her good humour—Miss Mellon at "Twig Hall"—Her position with Mr. Coutts during his first wife's lifetime much misrepresented—Instances of the great regard Mr. Coutts entertained for his second wife—Jeu d'esprit—The kaleidoscope—Mrs. Coutts accuses Sir David Brewster of stealing the idea from her juvenile "raree-shows"—Mrs. Coutts's widowhood—H.R.H. the late Duke of York and R. W. Elliston, suitors to the rich widow—Distinguished visitors—Attacks of the public press—Marriage with the Duke of St. Albans—Her bequest of the large fortune to Miss Angela Burdett—Curious calculations—Romantic character of the Duchess of St. Albans' existence—Reflections.

WE have now followed this singular individual throughout a career perhaps the most varied and fortuitous of any female in modern times. We have seen "the little girl of the players" raised from poverty, nay, even from wretchedness, to the dignity of the peerage, in the possession of wealth, not only commensurate with such an elevation, but

more than sufficient to support it in the height of affluence.

Amidst every change of fortune, the heroine of these pages enjoyed the regard of all those by whom she was surrounded; and the candid will not refuse to acknowledge that her character as a daughter, as a wife, as a friend and benefactress, was such as to render her worthy of the good fortune she ultimately attained. Warm-hearted, unaffected, and generous, her path through life was cheered by the friendship of those of her own rank as well as blessed by the gratitude of her inferiors in station.

The picture of honesty struggling against poverty is always a pleasing one, but should the struggle, despite every temptation, prove successful, it is more than pleasing—it becomes instructive. Such a virtuous example does the conduct of Miss Mellon and her otherwise faulty mother present on their first arrival in London. With no friends, few acquaintances, and less money, they managed not only to keep out of debt, but to command the respect of all who knew them, and to persevere in spite of every difficulty.

. It was a bold experiment for a girl so young as Miss Mellon then was to go through the fiery ordeal of a “London appearance,” surrounded by such a host of talent. But another circumstance, by no means to be overlooked, must have operated in no

small degree to shake the nerves of a timid aspirant, who had hitherto exhibited her talents in rooms only, or in small-sized theatres, namely, the enormous size of "the wilderness," as Mrs. Siddons called the old Drury Lane Theatre; which must have seemed to require the voice of a Boreas, and the actions of a giant, to convey proper expression to the multitudinous audience.\*

\* Some particulars relative to the old Drury Lane Theatre may not be considered out of place here.

In 1791-2, old Drury, better known as Garrick's Theatre, was pulled down, as Suett said, to prevent the unpleasantness arising from its coming down of its own accord. Whilst the process of removing the old and building the new theatre went on, the performers went to the Haymarket, not at first under the direction of the Drury Lane proprietors, but by their consent; they lent Colman the patent, and he engaged whomsoever he pleased, with this proviso, that for the proprietors' sake he would take care to engage all those whose talents, if disengaged, might tempt the Covent Garden manager into an offer. To the Haymarket they accordingly went, but left that theatre for a cause rather uncommon in these degenerate days—*they were too attractive*: the little theatre was incapable of holding the hundreds that crowded nightly to witness the exertions of Kemble, King, Suett, Bannisters, sen. and jun.; Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Goodall, and Miss De Camp, in a theatre where every varying expression could be noted, every whisper heard. As it was found that they turned away money, it became desirable to get into more spacious quarters, and to the King's Theatre they accordingly went, where they for some time proved amazingly attractive.

The then "new" theatre was opened on the 12th March, 1794, with a grand selection of sacred music, and on the 21st April following the season commenced with "Macbeth"—The Tyrant, by Kemble; *Macduff*, Palmer; *Lady Macbeth*, Mrs. Siddons;

Her gay spirit was not, however, to be overcome by difficulties; she came out, and obtained a situation of thirty shillings per week—which was at that time quite equal to Miss Mellon's humble expectations.

But this led to better things. Having now become an established London performer, her excursions into the country were highly profitable, particularly in those towns where she had played before. The reception she met among the private friends she had made while only a provincial actress was always warm and encouraging; not resulting from the brief ostentatious patronage of the passing hour, but from friendship founded on esteem, disinterested and enduring. The intercourse which the worthy banker, Mr. Wright, and the clergyman already

and *Malcolm*, by Charles Kemble, *his first appearance*. This short season closed on the 7th July, with a clear benefit for the widows and orphans of those who fell in the glorious action under Lord Howe. The regular season for the year was from the middle of September until the beginning of summer, and for this regular season Drury Lane opened on the 16th of the last-named month. But so uncertain had R. B. Sheridan been as to the time of completion, that he had made very few engagements. This partly arose from carelessness, and partly from a reliance upon the attraction of the new theatre itself. All the world, at least all the fashionable part of it, viewed the theatre previous to its being publicly opened. Visitors were in raptures, praising its splendour, its extent, saying fine things about the Amphitheatre at Rome, &c., &c. The actors, on the contrary, shrugged up their shoulders, and complained that Melpomene would be forced to sprawl, and

mentioned, permitted between her and their own daughters, and the general good-will evinced by all who knew her, abundantly testify how highly and honourably was Miss Mellon's character esteemed, even at a time when her worldly fortunes were incapable of commanding respect and attention.

Without possessing any very elevated claims to histrionic talent, Miss Mellon always managed to become a marked favourite with her audience wherever she went, and within a very short time of her *entrée* on the stage.

"As an actress," says a well-known dramatic writer, "Miss Mellon (for by this name she must be ever histrionically remembered) was in the school of Jordan, but by no means a servile imitator. She wanted the versatility and rapidity of the great

Thalia to bawl, if they hoped to be seen and heard. The dimensions of the theatre were as follows :—

Diameter of the pit	...	...	...	55ft.
Opening of the curtain	...	...	...	43ft. wide.
Height of ditto	...	...	...	38ft.
Height from floors of the pit to the ceiling	...	...	...	56ft. 6in.

There were 8 private boxes on each side of the pit, 29 round the first tier, and 11 "back-front" boxes ; 29 round the second tier, 10 on each side the gallery (now the slips), 9 on each side in what was called the cove.

The boxes held	...	...	...	1828 persons
Pit	...	...	...	800
Two-shilling gallery	...	...	...	675
One-shilling ditto	...	...	...	308
				<hr/> 3611

original, but she had some points that Mrs. Jordan had not. She might be described in Byron's words —

“ ‘ Being rather large, and languishing, and lazy,  
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.’ ”

“ Her acting was not at all calculated to bear the analysis of minute criticism ; yet it was such as to disarm adverse opinion, and to win by its witchery what it failed to secure by its excellence.”

There is an anecdote illustrative of this, which has been often repeated, though its authenticity is questionable. When she was playing *Constantia*, in the “Chances,” at Plymouth, and on her saying, “Now, if any young fellow would take a liking to me, and make an honest woman of me, I’d make him the best wife in the world ;” a young midshipman, who was sitting athwart the boxes, called out with an oath, in great rapture, “*I will ! and I’ve two years’ pay to receive next Friday !*”

Her good humour was inexhaustible, and whether as a poor actress or as a wealthy duchess, she always manifested the same buoyancy of spirits, kindness, and singleness of heart, which never fail to render their possessor a favourite in society. Illustrative of this is the following account which Mrs. Matthews, in the Memoirs of her husband, gives of Miss Mellon’s early social qualities, and which will be found strikingly indicative of that character in which she uniformly appears throughout these

pages. The authoress is speaking of the time when Miss Mellon was but a young and almost unnoticed actress on the London boards, supporting herself, and in a great measure her mother and step-father also, out of her slender pittance of thirty shillings a week.

“There often might be seen Harriot Mellon, then a youthful, slim, and beautiful creature; she would come all joy and simplicity for a day’s recreation. How merry and happy she was! Perhaps happier than when splendour hedged her in from the enjoyments of simple pleasures, the love of which I believe to have been inherent in her nature. I see her now returning from a tumble into a neighbouring pond, in the middle of which her horse has unexpectedly chosen to drink. How unaffectedly she protested, when dragged out, that she did not care for the accident, and walked with difficulty across the common, with her muslin garments saturated with muddy water, and her beautiful hair hanging down her back! How we laughed while she afterwards dragged off the wet clothes from her fine form, half apprehensive of the consequences! Then, again, what peals of merriment attended her re-appearance in the borrowed, ill-fitting dress that had been cast upon her, and the uncouth turban that bound her straightened hair, and which she was compelled to wear for the rest of the day. What



amusement her figure created ! How well she converted, by her good humour, an almost serious accident into one of general entertainment ! How many other drolleries have I seen her enact at various periods in the same place, my husband the leader of such revels. This little spot was, in reality, the *sans souci* of our friends, and Little Twig\* the presiding deity of the place, and the epitome of fun and merriment ; as such he was allowed perfect liberty for the time. One day, he entered the room with his hands full of the sibylline leaves of the nursery ; in other words, half a pack of dirty cards, which he had abstracted from his maid's drawer, and with which he offered to tell Miss Mellon her fortune. Borrowing the cant of the owner of them, he foretold that his favourite would some day be 'married,' not to Mr. Coutts, the banker, not to the Duke of St. Albans, but to a '*handsome carpenter.*'

"We ceased our intimacy with Miss Mellon just as she became a rich woman ; but in after years we never glanced at each other in public for a moment that I did not fancy that the Duchess of St. Albans looked as if she remembered these scenes, and felt that they were very happy. 'Twig Hall,' in short, was a place not to be forgotten by its visitors. Alas ! how few now remain to dwell upon the recollections this mention of it is calculated to renew.

"In after years her acts of filial duty and affec-

\* The nickname given to Charles Matthews, jun.

tion towards her mother becoming the general talk at Cheltenham first gained for Miss Mellon the notice of Mr. Coutts; and the manner in which she conducted herself, both before and after her union with that eccentric but clear-headed old man, was such as neither to forfeit his good opinion nor cause him to regret the alliance he had formed. How sensible he was of this, the singular bequest which he made to her of his whole fortune, as well as a thousand little marks of grateful esteem which he took a continual pleasure in paying her, sufficiently illustrate."

The part of her life which has been the most misrepresented is the period of her engagement to Mr. Coutts prior to the death of his first wife. This has been fully explained in another place, and there is no need for a repetition of it here. The circumstance of the intimacy between Miss Mellon and Mr. Coutts's daughters and their families, and her own spotless conduct in the eyes of those who had the best means of judging of it, sufficiently establish the true character of the intimacy which subsisted between the parties.

"Those whose play-going memories extend to thirty years back," observes a correspondent to the *Essex Herald*, "may remember Miss Mellon being frequently seen in the private box with Mr. Coutts's family at Drury Lane, between the intervals of the play; and her professional contemporaries were

often amused by telegraphic signals of his grandchildren during her acting. In Little Russell Street her humble neighbours used to reckon as a matter of curiosity the number of carriages at her door, and to watch the daughters of Mr. Coutts (then Marchioness of Bute, Countess of Guilford, and Lady Burdett) calling to see the young actress. A love of 'patronizing' seems to have prevailed in this family. Mr. Coutts, who for a man of the world was strangely romantic, would frequently adopt the interests of some poor family through chance or whim, and never cease until he had placed them all in a station too high for their qualifications, through every obstacle and in spite of remonstrance. From a similar amiable feeling, perhaps, his three admirably-conducted daughters were intimate with the humble, industrious actress, whose extreme propriety of conduct gave them no cause to repent it. Whatever were her ulterior views on the death of the first Mrs. Coutts (and it must be supposed she calculated upon being her successor), the decorum and respectful conduct of Miss Mellon to Mr. Coutts induced strangers to suppose she was an illegitimate daughter of her benefactor, who was more than forty years her senior.\* The marriage, when he was long

\* Mrs. Edwin, Mrs. Davison, and Miss Mellon, used to dress in the same room at the Lyceum : and the Countess of Guilford frequently called in upon the latter, and always addressed her most affectionately.

past eighty, was evidently an act of dotage ; a means of bestowing unbounded wealth, without giving ground for slander, on the woman who had resisted temptation from many quarters, in order to secure her singular exaltation through his high estimate of her conduct. After the first shock of hearing the old gentleman's folly, the family gradually became reconciled ; and since his decease all have lived on most intimate terms with the widow, who has wound up her strange eventful history as Duchess of St. Albans by leaving her whole wealth to the Coutts family, from whom it was derived.”\*

Instances out of number might be adduced, indicative of the high and sincere regard entertained for his wife's conduct and character by Mr. Coutts ; and we cannot resist the temptation of quoting one or two bearing strongly upon this point.

The first anecdote is from a London evening paper, and appeared soon after Mr. Coutts's death.

“ We learn from a correspondent who happened by chance to call in at Colnaghi's, the well-known printseller, yesterday morning, that, among other rare collections, he was shown a volume of engraved theatrical portraits, which had been lent to the late Mr. Coutts. Opposite to each portrait is written a short biographical sketch : appended to that of Miss Mellon, mentioning ‘ her retirement from the stage

\* *Essex Herald*, December 19, 1837.

in 1815,' is added the following note in the handwriting of Mr. Coutts:—

“‘ When she married Thomas Coutts, Esq., banker, of the Strand, which proved the greatest blessing of his life, and made him the happiest of men.’ ”

That Mr. Coutts was not the only person who congratulated himself on his union may be inferred from the many *jeux d'esprit* which appeared at the time in print. A large proportion of these were of a harmless and good-humoured tendency ; amidst a hundred of them we select the following as one of the neatest :—

“The French have an adage which says, the scarcest things in the world are ‘ Un bon *melon*, une bonne femme, et un bon ami ; ’ happy man art thou, Master Thomas Coutts, to find the *tria juncta in uno* ! ”

A gentleman who, when quite a youth, was an eye-witness to a circumstance highly indicative of that communion of feeling which existed between Mr. Coutts and his young wife, has been kind enough to commit it to paper in the following words :—

“Of the sincere tenderness, more filial perhaps than conjugal, with which Mrs. Coutts regarded her husband, I could adduce many proofs ; whilst Mr. Coutts’s whole conduct to her evinced a fervent delicacy of love that was not alloyed by any lack of

esteem. Keen-sighted, and, to the last, a man of quick perception as regarded the minds of those around him, no act, no word, no look escaped him that did not do honour to the object of his choice. A little incident which occurred in the early part of the year 1818 shall briefly tend to show the nature and strength of his affection. There had been a large dinner party, and the guests were beginning to show symptoms of departure, when a small parcel and note were brought in and handed to Mrs. Coutts. It proved to be a kaleidoscope, one of the very first that had appeared, and (if I mistake not) came as a gift from Dr. Brewster, the inventor, himself. The novel and splendid bauble was handed round, winning the admiration of the gazing throng, when suddenly Mrs. Coutts declared that she could make almost as handsome a raree-show in five minutes, and of the same description, playfully accusing Dr. Brewster of having ‘stolen the idea from her!’

“She retired for a few minutes, and returned with a tiny box, where, indeed, glowed a variety of gorgeous gems of every tint; their brilliancy magnified by judiciously fixed glasses, and arranged so as to display an alternation of shape with every movement.

“‘With something of this sort,’ said she, ‘I used in my girlhood to perplex my companions—only, to be sure, my gems were bits of coloured cloth, buds of flowers, and pieces of painted glass; for I had

not *him* then (patting Mr. Coutts on the shoulder) to give me such fine things. I used to demand a couple of pins for a peep; and when I had amassed a great many, I gave them away to an old woman for lollipops.'

"A little afterwards, taking a handkerchief to wipe the glass of the kaleidoscope, she unfolded what, indeed, seemed to be the identical one with which the Egyptian had gifted Sylvester Daggerwood's mother. It was old and darned; and, holding it up, she said, 'Only look! here, in the corner, "*Harriot Mellon*, eighteen hundred and"—I won't say how many years ago. High time for it to make its last appearance on this or any other stage than the ragman's bag.'

"'No, no!' cried Mr. Coutts, approaching her; 'give it to me; I shall never part with it;' and, folding it carefully up, he pressed it to his lips, and placed it in his bosom.

"I was then very young—a cadet, in more senses than one—but the sincerity of devotedness that marked the old gentleman's manner deeply affected me, whilst Mrs. Coutts's conduct on the occasion evinced anything but that love of display of which the unkind, the ungrateful, and the misjudging, have accused her. Without saying a word, she abruptly withdrew from the table, round which most of the party were assembled, and approaching the fireside, near which I stood, she turned away



from the group, and, wiping her eyes, in which the tears shone vividly, said to me, in a low voice —

“ ‘ Should I not love that excellent man ? Do not *you* ? ’ ”

During Mrs. Coutts's widowhood she did not fail to be addressed by many suitors from amongst the numerous and distinguished circle of acquaintance she had formed in her husband's lifetime.

The late Duke of York was said at one time to be a wooer of the wealthy widow ; and various other persons, from one of the wealthiest commoners in the land, down to the vain Robert William Elliston, had the pleasure of assuring their particular friends that they were on the point of leading the lady to the altar. These boastings were ultimately put to rest by her marriage with the Duke of St. Albans in 1827.

Mrs. Coutts had among her visiting acquaintances persons of the highest rank and morals in the realm. Almost immediately after her first marriage, the Bishop of Derry, with Mrs. Stuart, and their daughters, resided with her for some time in Stratton Street. While a widow, her friends increased to a large circle of exalted rank. With the late amiable Duchess of Somerset she was on terms of the greatest intimacy. Lady G. Stuart and Lady Dashwood King were frequently staying with her on visits. Lady Harriot Garnier's two daughters were married from her house, and *déjeuners* given by her

on both occasions. She visited the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, who, on one occasion, gave her his own box at the Derby musical meeting; and when we add that with such persons as the Earl and Countess of Breadalbane, Lord and Lady Lauderdale, the Earl of Buchan, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, of Corby, Lady A. D'Amiland, and Mdle. D'Este, and a host of other names which we might mention, with whom she was on terms of intimacy and friendship, at the time, too, when the press was the most virulent in its attacks, it can easily be supposed that she must have taken her place worthily in the station she had attained.

Miss Mellon appears to have been one of those not uncommon instances in society of persons who, without enjoying the greatest personal or mental attractions, possess the power of pleasing in the most eminent degree. The very beautiful, the very witty, or the very talented, seldom or never become such general favourites as those whose pretensions and endowments are of a more limited nature; and, notwithstanding Miss Mellon's personal attractions, which were many, and her wit, which was considerable, the secret of her success in life seems to have lain in good humour, right feeling, and faultless behaviour. A writer in the *Monthly Repository* gives the following account of her acting and personal appearance in early days:—"The Duchess

of St. Albans," says he, "had a more refined look in her younger days, at least in her favourite characters, than was observed in her countenance latterly. There never was any genius in her acting, nor much sustainment of character in any respect; she seemed never to have taken to the boards with thorough facility; but there was evidence of archness and agreeableness, a good deal that looked as if it could be very shrewd and pleasant off the stage. She had black hair, fine eyes, a good-humoured mouth, and a peculiarly joyous smile, which, with an expression of extreme affability, she retained to the close of her career."

Notwithstanding the many amiable qualities of heart and character which so eminently distinguished the Duchess of St. Albans, no lady of her own times ever suffered more from the envy and malignity of others. Her great, though exaggerated wealth, also afforded a bait for many, who, without the slightest acquaintance with facts, and perhaps also without entertaining any feelings, good or bad, towards her, took upon themselves the task of assailants; but with such a reckless disregard of truth, and such an ill-concealment of purpose, as to render their unfounded calumnies totally unworthy of notice, had it not been that by their continued repetition they have to a certain extent interwoven themselves with the general ideas

hitherto entertained of the duchess by a great portion of the community who had no other means of judging of her character.

Not the least remarkable act of her life was her bequest of the bulk of her large fortune to the descendant of him from whom she had received it.\* In this, as well as in the large sums which, during her own life, she bestowed upon Mr. Coutts's descendants, she has shown her high sense of justice, and the fidelity with which she executed the implied trust reposed in her. Indeed, in every action of her life she evinced a chivalrous regard to integrity, which did her honour, as well as a quick perception and appreciation of it in others. The slightest deviation from truth, the most furtive breach of honour, if once detected by her, dissolved

\* Miss Angela Burdett Coutts's fortune is said to amount to the sum of £1,800,000. The weight of this enormous sum in gold is, 13 tons, 7 cwt. 3 qrs. 12lbs., and would require 107 men to carry it, supposing that each of them carried 289 lbs. (equivalent to the weight of a sack of flour). This large sum may be partially guessed by knowing also, that counting at the rate of 60 sovereigns in a minute, for 8 hours a-day, and six days in the week, it would take ten weeks, two days, and four hours to accomplish the task! In sovereigns, by the most exact computation, each measuring in diameter 17-20ths of an inch, and placed to touch each other, it would extend to the length of 24 miles, 260 yards; and in crown pieces, to 113½ miles and 240 yards! £1,800,000 was the exact sum also left by old Jemmy Wood, of Gloucester.—*Morning Herald*.

at once every tie of familiar friendship; it never failed to destroy that confidence which is the soul of social communion, and which no one loved better to cherish than she did. A mind thus constituted was of all others the most likely to feel impatient and indignant at many of those little hollow-hearted acts which in all stations of life are unhappily too often brought under our notice; quick in all her feelings, as well as occasionally too unguarded in her expression of them, she thus not unfrequently created enemies who were rendered yet more bitter by their sense of former obligations, perhaps unworthily conferred.

Her life was a romance from beginning to end; dangerous and full of snares, not less from its early adversity than from its subsequent prosperity; both were in the extreme; yet in both she conducted herself in a manner that sheds a lustre on her memory. The circumstances in which she was placed were peculiar, her trials great, and the nameless, though formidable difficulties attending a change of rank such as hers, were as successfully overcome as the more dangerous evils which occasionally beset her path. Whatever her errors may have been,—and from these who is exempt?—we believe that in her case pride, promptness to take offence, hastiness of temper, and credulity, will complete the catalogue. They were outshone by

her virtues, and more than palliated by the strangeness of her position in society.

The biographer's task is now completed,—a task entered upon with hesitation, but parted from with regret ;—and if the perusal of these volumes call forth feelings in the mind of the reader akin to those which, during the study of their subject, have never ceased to influence the writer, she will look back upon this work not only with the satisfaction attending a successful undertaking, but with the purer and more lasting pleasure of having cleared from misrepresentation, and rescued from comparative oblivion, the character and memory of one, whose good deeds, even if unchronicled in the page of literature, will not be forgotten in the records of many hearts.

WILL  
OF  
THE DUCHESS OF ST. ALBANS.

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*(Official Copy, extracted from the Registry of the  
Prerogative Court of Canterbury.)*

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THIS is the last will and testament, or writing in the nature thereof, of me, the Most Noble Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans, late Harriot Coutts, of the Strand, in the county of Middlesex, widow of Thomas Coutts, late of the same place, Esquire, deceased, and which I do hereby declare to be made and executed, or intended to be made and executed, by me, in pursuance and in exercise of the powers and authorities given and reserved to me in and by the settlement made previous to my marriage with the Most Noble William Aubrey de



Vere, Duke of St. Albans, my present husband, and in and by the articles of co-partnership entered into by me before my marriage with the said duke respecting the banking business in the Strand aforesaid, and of all other powers and authorities whatsoever enabling me in this behalf, I hereby release the trustees of my said settlement from all sums of money and stock, or the produce thereof, which they may have paid or disposed of according to my orders. I hereby direct that the legacy duty payable upon the several pecuniary and other legacies and bequests and annuities given by this my will, and to be given by any codicil or codicils, shall be paid out of my personal estate. I give, bequeath and appoint unto Sir Coutts Trotter, Baronet; Edward Marjoribanks, Esquire; Sir Edmund Antrobus, Baronet; and William Matthew Coulthurst, Esquire, all of the Strand aforesaid; and William George Adam, Esquire, accountant-general of the High Court of Chancery, and John Parkinson, of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, in the said county of Middlesex, Esquire, their executors, administrators, and assigns, the sum of twenty thousand pounds sterling upon the trusts hereinafter mentioned, and for the benefit of Dame Sophia Burdett, wife of Sir Francis Burdett, Baronet, a daughter of the said Thomas Coutts, such sum being over and above the sums I have already given to her, amounting to one

hundred and eighteen thousand, six hundred, and two pounds, fifteen shillings, and all other sums that I may hereafter give to her in her lifetime. And I order and direct my said trustees to lay out and invest the said sum of twenty thousand pounds in their names in the public stocks or funds of Great Britain, or on real or government securities in England, at interest, with full power and authority to them my said trustees or trustee for the time being, to alter, vary and transpose such stocks, funds and securities from time to time as they or he shall think fit. And I declare and direct that they my said trustees, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the executors, administrators, and assigns of such survivor, do and shall stand and be possessed and interested in the said sum of twenty thousand pounds, and the stocks, funds and securities in or upon which the same shall for the time being be invested, and the dividends, interest, and proceeds thereof, upon trust to pay, transfer and assign the same unto such person or persons, in such parts, shares, and proportions, and with, under, and subject to such conditions, restrictions, and limitations, and in such manner and form as the said Dame Sophia Burdett at any time or times during her life, notwithstanding coverture, and whether covert or sole, by any deed or deeds, instrument or instruments in writing, to be by her sealed and delivered

in the presence of and attested by two or more credible witnesses, or by her last will and testament in writing, or any writing in the nature of or purporting to be her last will and testament, or any codicil or codicils thereto, to be by her signed and published in the presence of and attested by the like number of credible witnesses, should direct or appoint, and in default of and subject to any such direction or appointment, upon trust that they, my said trustees, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the executors, administrators, and assigns of such survivor, do and shall from time to time, during the natural life of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, pay and apply the dividends, interest, and produce of the said last-mentioned stocks, funds, and securities into the proper hands of her, the said Dame Sophia Burdett, for her sole and separate use and benefit, exclusively of any husband of the said Dame Sophia Burdett; and I do hereby declare that the same shall not be subject or liable to the debts, control, power, intermeddling, or engagements of any such husband, but the receipts of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, or of such person or persons as she shall or may from time to time direct or appoint to receive the same, shall, notwithstanding any such coverture as aforesaid, be good and effectual discharges for the same, or so much as in such receipts respectively shall be acknowledged or expressed to be received. And

from and after the decease of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, in default of and subject to any such direction or appointment as aforesaid, upon trust that they, my said trustees, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the executors, administrators, and assigns of such survivor, do and shall pay, transfer and assign the said trust money, stocks, funds, and securities, and the dividends, interest, and proceeds thereof unto, between and amongst all and every the daughters of the said Dame Sophia Burdett that shall be living at the time of her decease, share and share alike; and if there shall be but one such daughter living at her decease, then wholly to such one daughter.

I give and bequeath all my watches, jewels, trinkets, and ornaments of the person, to Angela Georgina Burdett, spinster, the youngest daughter of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, and a granddaughter of the said Thomas Coutts, for her own absolute use and benefit.

I give, devise, and bequeath, and, by force and virtue and in exercise and execution of every power and authority enabling me in this behalf, direct, limit, and appoint all my freehold, copyhold, and leasehold manors, messuages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever and wheresoever, and all my moneys, stocks, funds, and securities for money, and all my parts, shares, and interest of and in the

banking house and business in the Strand aforesaid, and the capital employed therein, and all the gains, profits and produce, benefit and advantage from time to time to arise or accrue therefrom, subject to the stipulations, provisoes and agreements contained in the said articles of copartnership, and all and singular, other the personal estate, property and effects whatsoever and wheresoever, and of what nature, kind, or quality soever, not hereinbefore disposed of, whereof or whereto I, or any person or persons in trust for me, now am, or is, or are, or shall or may be in any wise possessed or entitled at the time of my decease (subject nevertheless as to my personal estate, except leaseholds, to the payment of the said legacy of twenty thousand pounds so given and bequeathed as aforesaid); and as to all my real and personal estate, subject to the payment of my debts, whether by bond or other, specially or by simple contract, and whether contracted before or since my marriage with the said duke, and my funeral and testamentary expenses, and which I do hereby direct to be respectively paid in exoneration of the said duke from any liability to pay the same or any of them, unto and to the use of the said Sir Coutts Trotter, Edward Marjoribanks, Sir Edmund Antrobus, William Matthew Coulthurst, William George Adam, and John Parkinson,

their heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns respectively, according to the nature and quality thereof respectively, upon the trusts, and to and for the intents and purposes hereinafter declared and expressed of and concerning the same, that is to say, upon trust to pay the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, and profits thereof to the said Angela Georgina Burdett, until she shall marry or die, which shall first happen ; then from and after such marriage, to pay the same to her for her own sole and separate use and benefit during the then residue of her life, independent of the debts, control, or engagements of any husband, and for which her receipts alone shall be a sufficient discharge after the same shall become due, but not by the way of anticipation; and from and after the decease of the said Angela Georgina Burdett, upon trust to convey, assign, or otherwise assure all and singular the said real and personal estate, and shares and interest in the said banking business unto such one son of the said Angela Georgina Burdett, in the event of his attaining or having attained the age of twenty-one years, but not otherwise, and for such estate or estates, interest or interests as she, by any deed or deeds, with or without power of revocation, to be sealed and delivered in the presence of and attested by two or more credible witnesses, or by her last



will and testament in writing, or any writing in the nature thereof, or any codicil or codicils thereto, to be respectively signed and published in the presence of and attested by three or more credible witnesses, shall, notwithstanding any coverture, and whether covert or sole, direct or appoint, and in default of any such direction or appointment, or, so far as the same if incomplete shall not extend, in trust for such son of the said Angela Georgina Burdett as shall first attain the age of twenty-one years, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns absolutely; and in case there shall not be any son of the said Angela Georgina Burdett who shall live to attain the age of twenty-one years, then upon trust to pay the annual rents, issues, dividends, interests, gains, profits, and proceeds thereof to Johanna Frances Burdett, another daughter of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, and a granddaughter of the said Thomas Coutts, until she shall marry or die, which shall first happen; and in case she shall marry, then from and after such marriage to pay the same to her during the then residue of her life for her own sole and separate use and benefit, independent of the debts, control, or engagements of any husband, and for which her receipts alone shall be a sufficient discharge after the same shall have become due and payable, but not by way of anticipation; and from and after



the decease of the said Johanna Frances Burdett upon trust to convey, assign, or otherwise assure all and singular the said real and personal estate, and shares and interest in the said banking business, unto such one son of the said Johanna Frances Burdett, in the event of his attaining or having attained the age of twenty-one years, but not otherwise, and for such estate or estates, interest or interests, as she by any such deed or deeds, will or writing in the nature thereof, or codicil or codicils thereto to be respectively executed and attested as aforesaid, notwithstanding any coverture, or whether covert or sole, shall direct or appoint ; and in default of any such direction or appointment, or so far as the same if incomplete shall not extend, in trust for such son of the said Johanna Frances Burdett as shall first attain the age of twenty-one years, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns absolutely ; and in case there shall not be any son of the said Johanna Frances Burdett who shall live to attain the age of twenty-one years, then upon trust to pay the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, and annual profits and proceeds thereof to Clara Maria Burdett, another daughter of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, and a granddaughter of the said Thomas Coutts, until she shall marry or die, which shall first happen ; and in case she shall marry, then from and after such

marriage to pay the same to her during the then residue of her life for her own sole and separate use and benefit, independent of the debts, control, or engagements of any husband, and for which her receipts alone shall be a sufficient discharge after the same shall have become due and payable, but not by way of anticipation; and from and after the decease of the said Clara Maria Burdett, upon trust to convey, assign, or otherwise assure all and singular the said real and personal estate, and shares and interest in the said banking business, unto such one son of the said Clara Maria Burdett, in the event of his attaining or having attained the said age of twenty-one years, but not otherwise, and for such estate or estates, interest or interests, as she by any such deed or deeds, will or writing in the nature thereof, or codicil or codicils thereto to be respectively executed and attested as aforesaid, notwithstanding any coverture, and whether covert or sole, shall direct or appoint; and in default of any such direction or appointment, or so far as the same if incomplete shall not extend, in trust for such son of the said Clara Maria Burdett as shall first attain the age of twenty-one years, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns absolutely; and in case there shall not be any son of the said Clara Maria Burdett who shall live to attain the age of twenty-

one years, then upon trust during the life of Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, one of the sons of the said Edward Marjoribanks, and a godson of the said Thomas Coutts, to pay the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits and proceeds thereof to the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and his assigns for his and their own use and benefit ; and from and after his decease, upon trust to convey, assign, or otherwise assure all and singular the said real and personal estate, and shares and interests in the said banking business, unto such one son of the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks, in the event of his attaining or having attained the age of twenty-one years, but not otherwise, and for such estate or estates, interest or interests, as he by any such deed or deeds, will or writing in the nature thereof, or codicil or codicils thereto to be respectively executed and attested as aforesaid, shall direct or appoint ; and in default of any such direction or appointment, or so far as the same if incomplete shall not extend, in trust for such son of the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks as shall first attain the age of twenty-one years, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns absolutely : and in case there shall not be any son of the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks who shall live to attain the age of twenty-one years, then upon trust during the life of my god-

son, Coutts Lindsay, eldest son of Colonel James Lindsay, and a grandson of the said Sir Coutts Trotter, to pay the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits and proceeds thereof to the said Coutts Lindsay and his assigns for his life, for his and their own use and benefit; and from and after his decease, upon trust to convey, assign, or otherwise assure all and singular the said real and personal estate, and shares and interest in the said banking business, unto such one son of the said Coutts Lindsay, in the event of his attaining or having attained the age of twenty-one years, but not otherwise, and for such estate or estates, interest or interests, as he by any such deed or deeds, will or writing in the nature thereof, or codicil or codicils thereto to be respectively executed and attested as aforesaid, shall direct or appoint; and in default of such direction or appointment, or so far as the same if incomplete shall not extend, in trust for such son of the said Coutts Lindsay as shall first attain the age of twenty-one years, his heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns absolutely: and in case there shall not be any son of the said Coutts Lindsay who shall live to attain the age of twenty-one years, then upon trust for the partners for the time being in the said banking house at the time of the expiration or failure of all and every the trusts hereinbe-

fore declared, as tenants in common, and not as joint tenants, their respective heirs, executors, and administrators.

And my will is, that from time to time during the minority of every person who for the time being would be entitled to the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits and proceeds of the said real and personal estates, and shares of the said banking business, if such person were of full age, or during such part of such minority in which the said annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits and proceeds may not be hereby eventually given or disposed of to or for the benefit of some other person or persons, my trustees or trustee for the time being shall out of the said rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits and proceeds, pay and apply such annual sum or sums of money for the maintenance and education, benefit and advantage, of the person presumptively entitled for the time being, as they or he shall think necessary or proper, and that the residue thereof shall from time to time during every such minority, or such part thereof as aforesaid, or so long as the rules of law and equity will permit, be laid out and invested on real or government securities, or in some or one of the public funds, shall be from time to time added to and shall form part of the principal of my

personal estate, and that the same and the dividends, interest, and annual proceeds thereof, shall be paid, applied, and disposed of accordingly; provided always, and I do hereby declare my will to be, that the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and Coutts Lindsay, before or within the space of six calendar months next after they respectively shall come into the possession of the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profits, and proceeds of the said real and personal estate, and the said shares of the said banking business, shall take upon themselves respectively, and use in all deeds and writings wherein or whereunto he or they shall be a party or parties, and upon all other occasions, the names of "Thomas Coutts," and that the said three daughters of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, before or within the space of six calendar months next after they respectively shall come into the possession of the annual rents, issues, dividends, interest, gains, profit, and proceeds of the said real and personal estate, and the said shares of the said banking business, and all and every persons whom the said three daughters of the said Dame Sophia Burdett shall respectively marry, shall, within six calendar months next after such marriage, if she or they shall at the time of such marriage or respective marriages be so entitled, or otherwise, within six calendar

months next after she or they respectively shall severally become entitled as aforesaid, take upon herself, himself, and themselves respectively, and use in all deeds and writings whereunto or wherein he, she, or they should be a party or parties, and upon all other occasions the surname of "Coutts;" and that the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and Coutts Lindsay, and every such other person as aforesaid, shall, within such space of six calendar months aforesaid, apply for and endeavour to obtain an Act of Parliament or proper license from the Crown, or take such other means as may be requisite and proper to enable and authorize him, her, or them respectively to take the names of "Thomas Coutts," or the surname of "Coutts," as the case may happen, pursuant to the directions hereinbefore contained; and that in case the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and Coutts Lindsay, or any other such person or persons as aforesaid, shall refuse, or neglect, or discontinue to take or use such names or name as aforesaid, or to take such proper steps and means as may be requisite to enable and authorize him, her, or them so to do within the said space of six calendar months as aforesaid, or in case any of the said three daughters of the said Dame Sophia Burdett, or the said Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and Coutts Lindsay, or either



of them, shall intermarry with any person being by birth an alien, and whether such person shall or shall not have obtained letters of denization, or have been naturalized, then from and after the expiration of the said term of six calendar months, or from and immediately after such marriage, as the case may happen, and whether such marriage shall take place in my lifetime or after my decease, the trusts and powers hereinbefore declared for the benefit of the person or persons so neglecting or refusing, or so marrying an alien as aforesaid, and of his, her, or their son and sons respectively, shall cease, determine, and become utterly void in such and the same manner, to all intents and purposes, as if such person or persons so neglecting or refusing, or marrying as aforesaid, were actually dead without having or having had any son ; and the said premises shall thereupon, but subject to any prior trusts or limitations that may not have ceased or determined, go and belong to the person or persons for the time being next entitled in remainder or expectancy under or by virtue of the trusts aforesaid, in such and the same manner, to all intents and purposes, as if the person or persons so neglecting or refusing, or marrying as aforesaid, were actually dead without having or having had any son ; and I must express a hope that the several and respective

males who may be for the time being presumptively entitled to succeed to my share of the banking business may be brought up with those habits of business and industry which were the foundation of the prospects that I am now enabled to hold out to them.

Provided also, and I do hereby declare my will to be, that the person or persons for the time being entitled under or by virtue of this my will to my share of the gains and profits and proceeds of the said banking business, shall not have any power or control over the said business, or the mode of managing and conducting the said business, and shall not interfere therein, so long as the present partners shall continue in the said business, unless with the consent of such of the said partners as shall for the time being be engaged in carrying on the same, under the articles of copartnership already subsisting, or any other articles of copartnership to be hereafter executed ; but such proviso is not, after all the present partners shall have ceased to be engaged in the said business, to extend to any future partners who may be introduced into the business ; and as far as I have power so to do under the articles of copartnership, I expressly direct that no son or descendant of Alexander Trotter, of Dreghorn, near Edinburgh, Esquire, be admitted as partners in the said banking business.

Provided also, and I do hereby further direct that my share at the time of my decease of and in the capital employed in the said banking business may be continued and employed therein so long as the said business shall be carried on, under or by virtue of the present or any future articles of co-partnership.

Provided also, and I do hereby declare my will to be, that, subject to the proviso lastly hereinbefore contained, it shall and may be lawful to and for my said trustees, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the executors, administrators, and assigns of such survivor, to make sale of and call in any such part or parts of my personal estate (except leaseholds and such furniture and plate and other articles as hereinafter are particularly mentioned or referred to, and which I have directed to be enjoyed as hereinafter mentioned) as they shall think proper, or to continue the same or any part thereof on the securities or funds upon which the same may be invested at my decease, without regard to the adequacy or inadequacy of such securities, and to lay out the money to arise by any such sale or sales, and to be so called in as aforesaid, from time to time, upon real or government securities, or in some or one of the public stocks or funds, with full power and authority to alter, vary, and transpose such

stocks, funds, or securities, and also all other stocks, funds, and securities which by virtue of this my will, or the power of altering, varying, and transposing securities as aforesaid, shall come to their or any of their hands, and in all other respects to manage my said personal estate in such manner as they or he shall think proper, with the consent of the person for the time being entitled to the income arising therefrom (subject to any annuity or annuities that may then be payable) if such person shall then be of full age, but otherwise at discretion.

And I do hereby authorize and empower my said trustees, and the survivors and survivor of them, and the executors, administrators, and assigns respectively of such survivor, with the consent of the person for the time being entitled to the rents, issues and profits thereof, if such person shall be of full age, but otherwise at the discretion of my trustees or trustee for the time being, to demise or lease all or any of my freehold, copyhold, and leasehold messuages or tenements, lands and hereditaments, hereinbefore by me devised and bequeathed, unto any person or persons, for any term or number of years not exceeding fourteen years in possession, except my messuage or tenement, with the coach-houses, stables, offices, and appurtenances in

Piccadilly, in the county of Middlesex, late the residence of the said Thomas Coutts, and which may be demised or leased only during the minority of the person who would for the time being be entitled thereto, or to the rents, issues and profits thereof, if such person were of full age, it being my wish and intention that the same should be made the town residence of the person for the time being entitled to the gains, profits and proceeds of my share of the said banking business, at such rent, and under and subject to such covenants and restrictions as my trustees or trustee for the time being shall think proper, but without taking any fine or premium for the granting of such lease.

And it is my wish that the household and other furniture, the plate called the Mr. Coutts's plate, and all other plate not specifically bequeathed by this my will, or any codicil hereto; and all pictures, books, and every other article and thing whatsoever, whether useful or ornamental, in or about or usually enjoyed with the said messuages and premises late the residence of the said Thomas Coutts, should be holden and enjoyed therewith, by the person or persons for the time being entitled to the same messuage as a residence. And I hereby authorize and empower my said trustees for the time being, if they shall think fit, to renew the

lease or leases of my said messuage or tenement and premises in Stratton Street and Piccadilly aforesaid, or any of them, or any part thereof, or to purchase the fee-simple and inheritance thereof, or any part thereof; but in the event of the fee-simple being purchased, my will is, that the same shall, for the purposes of this my will, be still considered as personal estate, and may be resold when my trustees or trustee for the time being, with the consent in writing of the person for the time being entitled to the possession of the said premises shall think fit; and I direct that in such renewed leases, and the fee-simple if purchased, and the money arising by sale thereof, shall be held upon the trusts hereinbefore declared of my said messuage and premises, and the money which shall have been invested in such purchase as aforesaid.

And I do hereby declare it to be my will, that in case the said trustees hereinbefore nominated and appointed, or any of them, or any future trustee or trustees to be appointed as hereinafter is mentioned, shall die, or desire to be discharged of or from, or shall refuse or decline to act in, the trusts hereby in them reposed, then and in every such case it shall and may be lawful to and for the acting trustees, or the survivors or survivor of them, or the executors or administrators of such survivor, and so

for every or any future trustee or trustees to be appointed as hereinafter is mentioned, at any time or times before the trusts hereby in them reposed shall be fully executed, performed or discharged, by any writing or writings under their or his hands and seals or hand and seal, with the consent in writing of the person for the time being entitled to the income arising from my said real and personal estate (subject to any annuities which may be then payable), if such person be of full age, but otherwise at the discretion of my trustees or trustee for the time being, to nominate, substitute and appoint any other person or persons to be a trustee or trustees upon the trusts hereby in them reposed, and for that purpose to make due and execute all proper acts, conveyances, surrenders, transfers, assignments and assurances in the law, so as legally and effectually to vest the said trust estates, moneys, securities, funds and premises, in such new or other trustee or trustees only, or jointly with such continuing trustee or trustees, as the case shall require, upon the same trusts and for the same purposes as are hereinbefore declared of and concerning the same trust estates, moneys, securities, funds and premises respectively, and which shall be then subsisting undetermined or capable of taking effect, and then and in such case all and every such new trustee and trus-



tees shall and may in all things act and assist in the management, carrying on, and education, of the same trusts to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, and shall have and be vested with such and the same powers and authorities as if he or they had been originally hereby nominated and appointed trustees or a trustee for these purposes ; and it is my wish that in every appointment of a new trustee a preference may be given to any person who may have been admitted a partner in the said banking business, if any such person there be, and such person will accept of such appointment.

And it is my will that the trustees hereby nominated and appointed as aforesaid, and their respective heirs, executors, and administrators, and such trustees as shall be appointed by virtue of the proviso or power hereinbefore contained or expressed, and their respective heirs, executors, and administrators, shall be charged and chargeable only for such moneys as they respectively shall actually receive by virtue of the trusts hereby in them reposed, or in pursuance hereof to be reposed, in them respectively, notwithstanding his, their, or any of their giving or signing any receipt or receipts for the sake of conformity, and that they each and every of them shall only be answerable for himself and his own acts, and that they or any of them shall not be answerable for

any bank, banker, broker, or other person where or in whose hands all or any part of the said trust moneys shall or may be deposited, or for the insufficiency or deficiency of any fund or security in or upon which the said trust moneys or any part thereof shall be placed out or invested or continued as aforesaid, nor for any other misfortune, loss, or damage, which may happen in or about the execution or exercise of the aforesaid trusts or powers, or in relation thereto, except the same shall happen by or through their own gross, wilful defaults respectively, and that it shall and may be lawful to and for the trustees aforesaid respectively to retain to and reimburse himself and themselves respectively, their respective heirs, executors, and administrators, and allow to his and their respective co-trustee and co-trustees all costs, charges, damages, and expenses which they respectively shall or may sustain, suffer, or disburse in or about the execution of any of the aforesaid powers or in relation thereto.

And lastly, I hereby constitute and appoint the said Sir Coutts Trotter, Edward Marjoribanks, Sir Edmund Antrobus, William Matthew Coulthurst, William George Adam, and John Parkinson, executors of this my will, and hereby revoking all former wills and codicils by me at any time made, and I hereby declare this alone to be my last will and

testament. In witness whereof, I the said Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans, the testatrix, have to two parts of this my last will and testament in writing, or writing in the nature thereof, each part contained in three skins of parchment, set my hand and seal, that is to say, to the two first skins thereof I have set my hand, and to the third and last skin of each part I have set my hand and seal, this fourteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans, the testatrix, as and for her last will and testament, or writing in the nature thereof, in the presence of us who, in her presence, at her request, and in the presence of each other, hereunto subscribe our names as witnesses,

WILLIAM LEXHAM FARRER,

FRANCIS WORSHIP,

WM. JOSH. JARRETT,

All of 66, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

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THIS IS A CODICIL, or writing in the nature thereof, to be added to and taken as part of the last will and testament, or writing in the nature thereof, of me, the Most Noble Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans, late Harriot Coutts, widow, which will bears even date

herewith, and which will, and also this present codicil, are respectively made and executed, or intended so to be, in pursuance and exercise of the powers and authorities given and reserved to me in and by the settlement, and previous to my marriage with the Most Noble William Aubrey de Vere, Duke of St. Albans, and in and by certain articles of copartnership entered into by me before my said marriage respecting the banking business in the Strand, and of all other powers enabling me in that behalf. I give, bequeath, and appoint unto my husband, the said Duke of St. Albans (subject to the proviso hereinafter contained), an annuity or clear yearly sum of ten thousand pounds of lawful money of Great Britain, for and during the term of his natural life, the same annuity to be paid quarterly free from all deductions, by four equal quarterly payments or portions, on Lady-day, Midsummer-day, Michaelmas-day, and Christmas-day, in every year, and the first quarterly payment thereof to be made on such of the said days as shall first happen after my decease.

I give to the said duke (subject to the proviso hereinafter contained) all my freehold, copyhold, and leasehold estates at or near Holly Lodge, Highgate, in the county of Middlesex, whether in my own occupation or in the occupation of my tenants, and

all the plate, linen, books, furniture, and effects of every description that may be in or about my residence called Holly Lodge, at Highgate aforesaid, and the silver-gilt service of plate in my mansion-house or residence in Piccadilly, and the silver Hebe and stand presented to me by Sir Francis Burdett, and also my other messuage in Piccadilly aforesaid, formerly occupied by the said Sir Francis Burdett, and since by the Dowager Countess of Guilford, for and during the term of his natural life.

And I give to the said duke the sum of ten thousand pounds to enable him to furnish the last-mentioned messuage, and also the rooms in the Strand hereinafter mentioned, if he shall choose to occupy the said rooms; and I direct that all rents that may be payable for such part of my estate at Highgate and in Piccadilly aforesaid, given and bequeathed to him for his life as aforesaid, as is leasehold, shall be paid by my executors during the life of the said duke.

And I give to the said duke all the wines, liquors, and perishable articles that may be in and about my residence at Holly Lodge aforesaid at the time of my decease absolutely.

And I direct that the said duke (subject to the proviso hereinafter contained) shall be at liberty to occupy my rooms in the banking-house in the Strand

during his life, or so long as he shall absolutely think fit, without paying any rent or taxes for the same.

I also give to the said duke absolutely so much of the plate purchased by me as shall be of the value of two thousand pounds sterling, and I direct that the said duke shall select the same.

Provided always, and I do hereby declare my will to be, that if the said duke do and shall permit or suffer his uncle, Lord Amelius Beauclerk, or any of his family, or either of his the duke's brothers, Lord Frederick or Lord Charles Beauclerk, or either of their families, to reside with him, or in either of the houses hereinbefore given to him the said duke for his life as aforesaid, or in any other house belonging to him the said duke for the time being, for the space of one week, either at one time or at several distinct times, in any one year, then and in such case the said annuity or yearly sum of ten thousand pounds shall thenceforth cease and determine, as if the said duke were actually dead, and then and in such case also the gift and bequest hereby made to the said duke for his life of the said estate at or near Holly Lodge aforesaid, and the said messuage and premises in Piccadilly aforesaid, and the rooms at the banking-house aforesaid, and the plate and other articles given to him for his

life as aforesaid, shall cease and determine as if he were actually dead.

I give and bequeath absolutely all wines, liquors, and perishable articles that may be in my mansion or dwelling-house in Piccadilly, now in my occupation, to Angela Georgina Burdett, in my said will named and described, or the person who shall first become entitled to the possession of the said mansion on my decease.

And I give, bequeath, and appoint the following annuities or clear yearly sums, all of lawful money of Great Britain, to the several persons hereinafter named for their respective lives, to be paid out of the dividends, interest, and annual proceeds of my personal estate (except leasehold estates), that is to say, to Ann Cranford, of Dundee, in Scotland, spinster, one annuity or clear yearly sum of two hundred pounds; to Sir James Stuart, of Allanbank, in North Britain, Baronet, an annuity or clear yearly sum of one hundred pounds; to Sophia Woodcock, late Sophia Stuart, an annuity or clear yearly sum of two hundred pounds; to Louisa Henrietta Sheridan, of No. 7, Belgrave Street South, Belgrave Square, in the county of Middlesex, spinster, an annuity or clear yearly sum of fifty pounds; to Henry Harrison, of Percy Street, Bedford Square, in the county of Middlesex, gentleman, an annuity



or clear yearly sum of five hundred pounds; and to Eleanor Catherine Goddard, spinster, lately residing with me, an annuity or clear yearly sum of two hundred pounds; and I direct that the said several annuities shall be paid quarterly, by four equal quarterly payments or portions, on Lady-day, Midsummer-day, Michaelmas-day, and Christmas-day, in every year, and that the first quarterly payment thereof respectively shall be made on such of the said days as shall first happen next after my decease; and I give to Clara Harrison, wife of the said Henry Harrison, if she shall survive him, an annuity or clear yearly sum of five hundred pounds for her life, to commence from his decease, the said last-mentioned annuity to be paid quarterly, on the days of payment aforesaid, out of the dividends, interest, and annual proceeds of my personal estate (except as aforesaid), and the first quarterly payment thereof to be made on such of the said days of payment as shall first happen after the decease of the said Henry Harrison; and if Clara Harrison, the daughter of the said Henry Harrison, shall survive her father and mother, I give to her an annuity or clear yearly sum of five hundred pounds for her life, the same to be paid to her quarterly, for her sole and separate use, and for which her receipts shall be effectual discharges, notwithstanding any

coverture, but without any power to charge or anticipate the same, and the first quarterly payment thereof to be made at the expiration of three calendar months next after the decease of the survivor of her father and mother; I give to the three Misses Blair, now residing at Westwood Cottage, Balthyack, in Perthshire, and the survivors and survivor of them, an annuity or clear yearly sum of three hundred pounds during their lives and the life of the survivors and survivor of them, to be paid quarterly on the four days of payment aforesaid, out of the dividends, interest, and annual proceeds of my personal estate (except as aforesaid), the first quarterly payment thereof to be made on such of the said days of payment as shall first happen after my decease. And I give and bequeath to Elizabeth Williams, my housekeeper, an annuity or clear yearly sum of one hundred pounds for her life; and to Joseph Tournier, my house-steward, an annuity or clear yearly sum of fifty pounds for his life; and to Mrs. Elizabeth Evans Townsend, of the Corn Exchange, an annuity or clear yearly sum of one hundred pounds for her life; and to Elizabeth Fox, of the Strand, widow, one annuity or clear yearly sum of one hundred pounds for her life; and I direct that the said several annuities to the said Elizabeth Williams, Joseph Tournier, and Elizabeth

Evans Townsend shall be paid quarterly, by four equal payments or portions, on Lady-day, Midsummer-day, Michaelmas-day, and Christmas-day, in every year, and that the first quarterly payment thereof respectively shall be made on such of the said days as shall first happen after my decease; and that the said annuity of one hundred pounds so given to or for the benefit of the said Elizabeth Fox shall be paid weekly by equal weekly payments, and the first weekly payment shall commence at the end of one week from my decease; and I direct that the wages which I shall be paying to —— Snell, my coachman, at my decease, shall be continued to be paid to him during his life, at such times and in such manner as such wages shall be payable to him at my decease; I give to Betsy Evans, of the Corn Exchange, spinster, for her life, an annuity or clear yearly sum of fifty pounds; and to Ellen Townsend and Georgina Townsend, nieces of the said Elizabeth Evans Townsend, an annuity or clear yearly sum of fifty pounds apiece for their respective lives, the said three annuities of fifty pounds each to commence and be computed from the decease of the said Elizabeth Evans Townsend, and to be paid quarterly, on the days of payment aforesaid, the first quarterly payment thereof respectively to be paid on such of the said days as shall first and

next happen after the decease of the said Elizabeth Evans Townsend; and I hereby declare that I have given the said annuity to the said Betsy Evans in the hope that she will take care of the said Ellen and Georgina Townsend after the death of the said Elizabeth Evans Townsend, but the expression of such hope is not to be considered as compulsory. And my will is that the said annuities and payments hereinbefore given and directed to be made as aforesaid, and not charged on any particular fund, shall be respectively paid out of the same funds as the other annuities are hereinbefore directed to be paid.

I give to Dudley Coutts Marjoribanks and Harriot Marjoribanks, children of Edward Marjoribanks, of the Strand aforesaid, Esquire, and respectively godchildren of the said Thomas Coutts and myself respectively, the sum of five thousand pounds apiece of lawful money aforesaid, the same respectively to be considered as vested legacies on my decease.

I give to Margaret Trotter, daughter of Sir Coutts Trotter, Baronet, the sum of five thousand pounds of lawful money aforesaid, to become vested in her at my decease.

In all other respects I ratify and confirm my will. In witness whereof I have to two parts of this

codicil, or writing in the nature thereof, set my hand and seal this fourteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven.

HARRIOT ST. ALBANS.

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Harriot, Duchess of St. Albans, the testatrix, as and for a codicil, or writing in the nature thereof, to her last will and testament, or writing in the nature thereof, in the presence of us who, in her presenc , at her request, and in the presence of each other, hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses,

WILLIAM LEXHAM FARRER,

FRANCIS WORSHIP,

WILLIAM JOSEPH JARRETT,

All of 66, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

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PROVED at London, with a codicil, 16th of February, 1838, before the judge, by the oaths of Edward Marjoribanks, Esq., Sir Edmund Antrobus, Bart., and William Matthew Coulthurst, Esq., three of the surviving executors, to whom administration was granted, limited so far only as concerns all the right, title, and interest of the deceased in and to all and singular the messuages or tenements, erecticns, buildings, lands, grounds, tithes, rents,

boxes at and shares in the public theatres, and all other tenements whatsoever of or to which the said deceased, or any other person or persons in trust for her at the time of her decease, was or were possessed or entitled for any term of years (except such as she was possessed of or entitled to as a trustee or mortgagee) together with the several leases and agreements for leases of such premises, and all mesne assignments thereof for the residence of the terms which were to come therein at the time of the said deceased's death, and in and to all and every the principal sum and sums of money due and owing to the said deceased, or any person or persons in trust for her, on mortgage, judgment, bond, bill, note, or any other security, or by simple contract, and all the public or government stocks, or funds and annuities, Bank Stock, East India Stock, and South Sea Annuities, standing in her own name, or in the names or name of any person or persons in trust for her, and also all shares in ships, and all shares in any public or private company, society, or concern whatsoever, whether in her own name, or in the name or names of any other person or persons in trust for her, and all ready moneys in any bank or banker's hands, and all the part, shares, and interest of her the said deceased of and in the banking-house and business in the Strand, and to which she became entitled under the will of her

late husband, and the articles of copartnership, or any of them, or otherwise howsoever, and all the capital of her the said deceased employed therein, subject to the provisoes and restrictions contained in the said articles, and all the gains, profits, produce, benefit, and advantage to arise or accrue from such part and share of the said banking-house and business, and all interest, dividends, interests, and proceeds due and owing at the time of the said deceased's death, and which have since become and may hereafter become due and owing for and in respect of all or any of the said several and respective premises, and all the goods and furniture, pictures, prints, plates, linen, books, china, watches, jewels, trinkets, and ornaments of the person, and all and singular the goods, chattels, personal estate and effects of the said deceased, of what nature or kind soever, whether in possession, or which might in any manner whatever become vested in her during her coverture, and which the said deceased, by virtue of a certain indenture bearing date the 15th June, 1827, had a right to dispose, and hath disposed of accordingly, and all profits, produce, increase and accumulations, and savings arising therefrom, and all interest and dividends due or to grow due in respect thereof, but no further or otherwise, they having been first sworn (to wit) the said Edward Marjoribanks and William Matthew



Coulthurst, before the worshipful Herbert Jenner, and the said Sir Edmund Antrobus before the worshipful John Daubeney, respectively doctor of laws and surrogates, duly to administer. Power reserved of making the like grant to William George Adam and John Parkinson, Esquires, the other surviving executors, when they shall apply for the same.

CHARLES DYNELEY,	}	Deputy Registers.
JOHN IGGULDEN,		
W. J. GOSTLING.		

Personalty sworn under £600,000.





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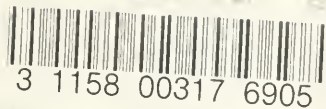
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